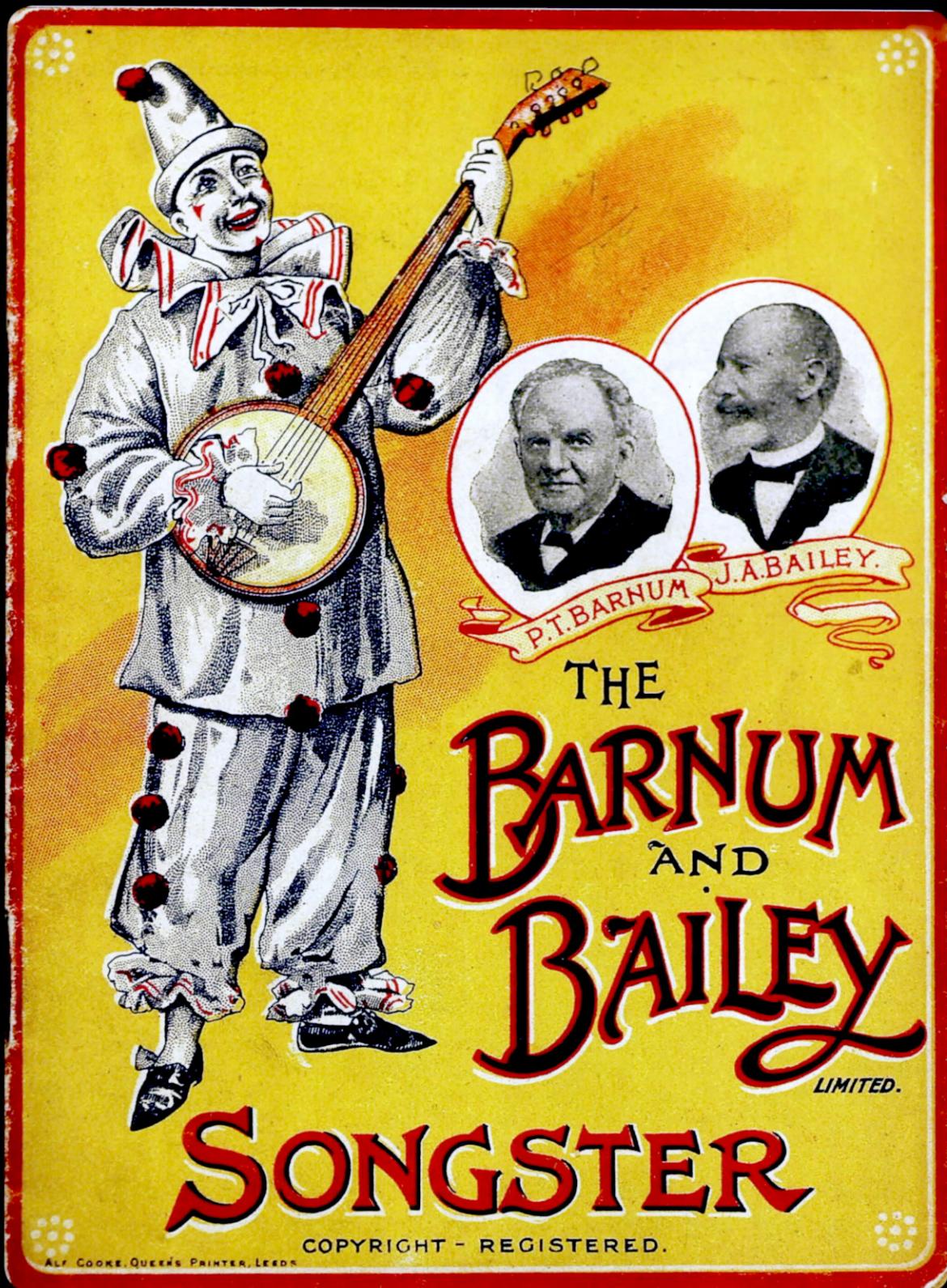


Bandwagon

July-August 2013 Vol. 57 No. 4



The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

The Stuart Thayer Prize

The Circus Historical Society seeks to encourage the highest level of research, scholarship and writing about American circus history through the Stuart Thayer Prize. The award is named in honor of premier circus historian Stuart Thayer, whose published works on the American circus are among the most notable resources for contemporary historians.

The annual prize, awarded by a committee appointed by the Circus Historical Society president, recognizes superior works of scholarship pertaining to American circus history.

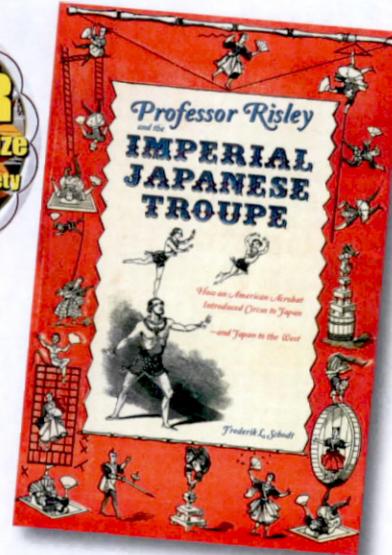
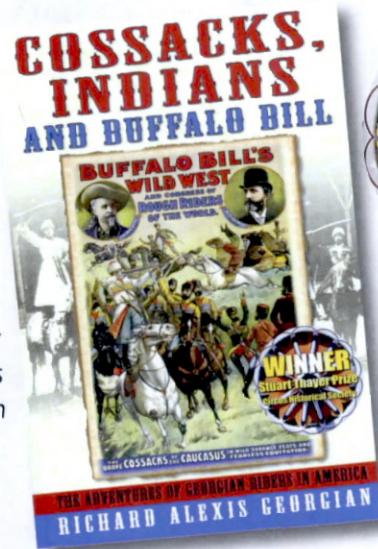
Nominations for the Stuart Thayer Prize may be submitted by current members of CHS. Works can be in any printed format including book, article, pamphlet, booklet, bibliography or catalog. Works that are loaded on a permanent website may also be considered.

The deadline for the next Stuart Thayer Prize, to be awarded at the 2014 CHS Conference, is March 31, 2014.

For nomination form and additional information, visit the CHS website:

www.circushistory.org/ThayerPrize.htm

2012 Award Winner
by Richard Alexis
Georgian



2013 Award Winner
Frederik L. Schodt

Eligibility

Content. A nominated work must be substantially about American circus history or a very closely related topic.

Format. Works may be in any printed form: book, article, pamphlet, booklet, bibliography, compendium of essays, exhibit or sales catalogue, a single essay that is part of a larger work, or an original work contained in digital format on a disk or loaded on a permanent website.

Posthumous publication. Works by deceased authors being published posthumously for the first time are eligible for nomination. The prize shall be awarded to the closest survivor or

an immediate family representative, or to a representative of the organization that accomplished the publication.

Exclusions. Exhibits, websites, symposiums, etc., that do not issue a permanent document or are not archived in some permanent format are not eligible for nomination. Fictional works are not eligible. Simple re-printings and new editions of older works, without annotation or other updating that substantially improve the value of the work are not eligible for nomination. Virtual and digital library content and activity are not eligible for nomination.

Complete details and the nomination form can be downloaded from the CHS website at
www.circushistory.org/ThayerPrize.htm or by writing:

Stuart Thayer Prize
c/o Maureen Brunsdale; 8900 Milner Library;
Illinois State University; Normal, IL 61790-8900

Bandwagon

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society
July-August 2013 Volume 57, Number 4

Editor

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Website and Back Issues

An index of *Bandwagon* articles from earlier issues is available online at www.circushistory.org. Back issues are available from the Office of Publication.

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This watercolor, depicting scenes of the Barnum & Bailey clowns, is part of a series of 12 sketches that were the original designs for postcards issued on the German leg of the show's European tour.

The Ringling
Museum

Circus Historical Society

circushistory.org

Mission Statement

"To preserve, promote, and share through education the history and cultural significance of the circus and allied arts, past and present."

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Editor's Note

About the Issue

One of the most exciting things about studying the history of the circus is finding thematic strings that tie unlikely subjects, eras, and authors together. This issue was begun with seemingly disparate contributions; new CHS member Dick Moore's article about a fascinating set of lantern slides and two articles documenting a pair of nineteenth century equestrienne artists written by Dan Draper, longtime CHS member and Bandwagon contributor. The contributions seemed well suited to our members' interests, and in reading over them, I was inspired by the realization that both of the artists studied by Draper had crossed the Atlantic to perform with Barnum & Bailey in England.

From Fred Dahlinger, Jr.'s review of a book about German show trains to Kelly Zavocic's discovery of a whimsical print that celebrated The Greatest Show on Earth's 1889 visit to London, everything seemed to relate, in ways big and small, to circus interests abroad. Even the exciting description of the 2014 CHS convention in Montreal suggests the global interconnectedness of this wonderful art form we celebrate.

This issue benefits from the contribution of experienced circus historians as well as scholars who bring new expertise and insights to circus topics. I am grateful to all of the contributors for their part in sustaining a dialog about circus history through diligent research and new epiphanies. John Wells, his wife Mardi, and their layout artist, Howard Pace, have once again produced a wonderful issue through their creativity, hard work, and unending patience. Pete Shrake at Circus World Museum and Fred Dahlinger, Jr. were of great assistance in finding and identifying images. Likewise Fred Pfening III has continued to be supportive in advising on editorial questions of all types. Most especially, Fred has been a much appreciated sounding board for the tricky task of choosing a cover image. I have learned that the Pfening family and I seem to share a similar taste for good cover images!

I am grateful also for the support that I have received from the CHS Board and membership. *Bandwagon* is a remarkably unique journal; the range of stories to be told and the variety of disciplines that can be studied through the circus seems unending. I look forward to continuing to receive submissions that will help fill future issues with the same kind of informative and engaging content we all enjoy.

J.L.P.

Visit circushistory.org to find articles from earlier issues of *Bandwagon* as well as historic circus routes, text from historic newspapers, and other insightful resources.

On the cover

Barnum and Bailey in the Old Country

by Jennifer Lemmer Posey

This issue's front cover features an 1899 songster printed by Alf. Cooke, Queen's Printer in Leeds, and sold on the Barnum & Bailey show during the British leg of its European tour. The small, 32 page booklet is part of the Ringling Museum's Circus Collections. Songsters were sold to accompany pre- and aftershow performances of popular music and amusing compositions. They originated in the era of the one ring American circus and were often sold by the clowns and comic performers who would entertain the audiences with their satirical lyrics.

Those early songsters from the first half of the nineteenth century were filled with lyrics for songs that were part of a specific performer's routine and would have reflected his own satirical views. By the end of the century, the souvenir pamphlets were more often published and sold by the show rather than the individual. The contents, while still including political and social satire, became more generic, including lyrics for popular songs of the time.

Demonstrating the influence of the European commercial printers on much of the peripheral materials produced for the show while abroad, the cover of this songster features a single figure, the singing clown. The generous use of negative space, enhanced by a wash of red over the stark yellow background is characteristic of European aesthetics of the period. The use of flat, bold colors made European posters particularly eye catching, minimizing the number of subjects, but rendering them with thoughtful details, like the clown's banjo. The portraits of the two great impresarios are reproduced through a photo-lithographic process, recycling images that had appeared on earlier advertising. The hand drawn lettering echoes the same title as printed on the *Official Programme* issued for the Railway Tour of Great Britain in the Season of 1899.

Aside from its artistic merit, the Barnum & Bailey songster represents a historic moment in the show's history. Up to that point, the Greatest Show on Earth had been a privately held business, with James A. Bailey at its head, following the death of his partner, P. T. Barnum. While in London in 1899, Bailey transferred ownership of the circus to a limited liability company, issuing 400,000 shares of stock, of which 266,667 were offered for sale.¹ According to Charles Hutchinson, Bailey received \$1,300,000 and 133,000 shares of the newly formed company and was appointed Managing Director of the Barnum & Bailey Ltd. at a salary of \$15,000 annually.² George Starr and Joseph McCaddon were also on

the newly formed board. Questions arose about the future of the American show, with the *New York Times* reporting speculations that the newly formed company would remain abroad.³ While the board did opt to keep the circus in Europe for several more seasons, it ultimately was clear that the mammoth enterprise would return to its winter home in Bridgeport, Connecticut at the close of 1903.

But in 1899, before any return to America, the Barnum & Bailey Ltd. offered the biggest and best of the American circus to audiences across Great Britain. That year's railway tour, which ran from early April to mid-November, saw the show travel to 104 towns and cities across England, Wales, and Scotland. The popular reception and relative success of ticket sales led to the Board of Directors' decision to continue their tour on the European continent the following year. In the *Official Programme* for 1899, the aftershow is advertised as "Grand Vaudeville Entertainment...A supplemental entertainment in the Main Exhibition Pavilion consisting of a diversified programme of highly artistic merit, including character sketches, songs, dances, negro minstrelsy and musical diversions and humorous skits." These entertainments were available to guests for an extra sixpence. Filled with lyrics of popular and satirical songs to be performed by comic actors and clowns, the songster likely was sold to accompany these aftershow performances and provide yet another opportunity for the audience members to leave their money at the lot and go home with an amusing souvenir of the remarkable American entertainment.

Endnotes

1. Richard E. Conover, *The Affairs of James A. Bailey*, 1957, 5.
2. *Notice of Appeal in the case of Anna Isabelle Hutchinson vs. Joseph T. McCaddon and Theodore D. McCaddon*, February 10, 1913.
It should be noted that the Conover book states Bailey's annual salary as \$20,000.
3. *New York Times* "Barnum & Bailey's Circus Reorganized," February 15, 1899.



The Circus Historical Society's 2013 convention

*story and photos by Pete Adams
with notes from Shirley Adams*

The annual convention of the Circus Historical Society was held in Peru, Indiana from July 17 to 20, 2013 with over 85 people in attendance. Held at the Best Western Circus City Inn, a most appropriate location for our group of circus enthusiasts, the gathering had something for everyone. Trustee John Polacsek did an outstanding job creating the program of events and all were sorry that a family crisis forced John to leave on the first night of the convention.

Registration began on July 17th while the Board of Trustees held their meeting. That afternoon a group of approximately 25 headed to Indianapolis, stopping outside the city for dinner at the City Barbeque before making their way to box seats at the UniverSoul Circus. The performance, which began with a display of ice skating, included the Barreda elephants, the Willy Family on the high wire, the Giang Brothers' hand balancing, silks, an exciting teeterboard act, and of course, Onionhead, the show's signature clown.

After the late night at UniverSoul, the convention got underway the next morning at the Ivy Tech Community College in Peru. Bob Cline, the Secretary/Treasurer of the society, welcomed the audience. Deborah Walk, incoming President of CHS for 2014-2015, introduced Pete Adams who, with Pat Pagel, presented to current CHS President Judy Griffin a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the President of the Circus Fans Association of America, Peter Wagner. The presentation emphasized the importance of collaboration among the circus organizations and the



Left to right are Pete Adams, Judy Griffin, and Pat Pagel.

History Presenters



Lane
Talburt



Terry Abbot



Steve Gossard



Charles Conrad



Sarah Chapman



Kassidy
Rhinaman

significant role that CHS plays in preserving and sharing circus history through the publication of *Bandwagon*.

The presenting of original research was kicked off as Trustee Maureen Brunsdale introduced Lane Talburt with his presentation on "African Americans" in the circus. Lane gave special attention to the stories of King Charles Weathersby, the first black musician in the Hoxie Tucker Circus, and Manuel "Junior" Ruffin, a wild animal trainer also with the Hoxie Circus. Weathersby joined a minstrel band at the ripe old age of 15 and went on to play for Hoxie Tucker in the side show band. Junior Ruffin was 12 or 13 when he first saw his future mentor Clyde Beatty perform. Ruffin later became Beatty's cage boy and at 15 started working with the cats. In 1958 Ruffin first worked solo with the cats and went on to perform as Prince Bogino on the Hoxie Circus for many years.

"Fifteen Years on the Road" with RB&BB, given by Terry and Dick Abbot, was the next presentation. Terry began as a dancer in New York and joined Ringling, performing on the web and on a trampoline. In 1966 the Abbots moved to Sarasota and she worked again for Ringling, this time making props and costumes until retiring in 1982. The presentation was illustrated with photos of the many costumes that she worked on as well as photos of her performances.

Steve Gossard began researching his presentation, "Competition and Controversy in Performance," in 1984. He shared images of leaping competitions that eventually evolved into the trapeze of today. Gossard also introduced the connection between the cloud swing on a slack rope and the single trapeze. He discussed the development of the flying return in 1870s and the stories of such renowned performers as the wire walker Blondin and leapers Thomas King and William Batchelor.

Reports from representatives of the major museums associated with circus history began with Tom Dunwoody, Director of the International Circus Hall of Fame, explaining the latest items received for that collection. Peter Shrake, Archivist at Circus World Museum, shared news of the Par-

kinson Library's new acquisitions and the ongoing project to add to the 2500 images that are currently available online. Next, Maureen Brunsdale from the Milner Library at Illinois State University updated the group on her successful program integrating circus into curriculum across the campus. Deborah Walk gave an update on the Ringling Museum, sharing that the collection has over 15,000 images online, over 400,000 visitors a year, and a new program, Collecting Recollections, which preserves the stories of circus performers and staff through taped interviews.

A highlight of the day was Dick Moore's (below) display of antique circus lantern slides from his collection. Dick gave an introduction to the workings of his antique projector as well as the slides, and then used the projector to show a variety of circus related slide images. This most entertaining program gave new insight to another type of historic media that lends understanding to circus history.





The new ticket wagon at the International Circus Hall of Fame.
photo by John Wells

Charles Conrad, Music Director of the Indianapolis Wind Symphony and active member of the Windjammers International, presented "Circus Band Music," looking at the bands of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Conrad displayed antique instruments, shared a written narrative, and played music from 14 different marches. His program was fun and absolutely unique.

With 20 years in the circus, Sarah Chapman presented "Caught in the Middle," about her years performing in aerial and clown acts. The talk underlined the idea that the circus was constantly reinventing itself during her lifetime and the same can be expected in the future.

The final presentation of the day was given by a young lady who is part of the circus show at the International Circus Hall of Fame. Cassidy Rhinaman has researched Mickey King, Lillian Leitzel, and Annie Oakley for school reports. It is certainly never too young to start research in the field of circus.

Following a delightful dinner, the annual circus auction was held with America's Favorite Auctioneer, Al Stencell, assisted by members of the society.

The next day of meetings and activities were held at the International Circus Hall of Fame with an introduction of the property given by Tom Dunwoody and Tino Wallenda Zoppé. A great visit was planned by Tom and his volunteers for the members of CHS and our group received a warm welcome.



The first activity in the tent was a concert provided by Charles Conrad (see photo on page 7) and an orchestra of approximately 62 members who played their hearts out, performing 17 different selections which were enjoyed by everyone.

Michael Beauchamp (top left), dressed as Captain Terrell Jacobs, the Lion King, offered a great story of the performer's circus career. Beauchamp explained the story of Modoc the elephant and Jacobs' love of Peru and the winter quarters for Hagenbeck-Wallace. This program was lively, humorous, and well executed.

The Jacobs' story was followed by Ken Kawata's (left) presentation "Looking at the Big Cats," a discussion of many of the most talented and popular big cat trainers.

After lunch under the big top, the group enjoyed an elephant encounter presented by Ringmaster John Fugate and Billy Morris, the elephant presenter. The International Circus Hall of Fame Big Top Circus followed, dedicated to the memory of Gunther Gebel-Williams. Cassidy Rhinaman, last seen as a conference presenter, came out on the elephant with Billy Morris for the *National Anthem*.

The excellent performance included such acts as the beautiful Aurelia Wallenda on the cloud swing, Dieter Galambos' balancing act, the Alexanders' juggling, and The Flying Wallendas led by Tino Wallenda Zoppé.

The evening activity was "Circus Magic 13", the presentation of the Peru Youth Circus which involved over 200 youth from their community. As customary, the program began with the introduction of Miss Circus City and the Performance King and Queen for this year which was followed by the largest circus band in creation, the Circus City Festival Band.

The young circus performers excelled in presenting acts such as low casting, Spanish web, tumbling, Roman ladders, trampoline, unicycles, trapeze, and high wire. Twelve young people performed on the high wire, beginning by walking up on either side of the rigging from the bleachers to the platforms. The act culminated with the seven person pyramid, executed precisely and with great style. The Peru Youth Circus is known as the only youth circus performing this feat on a regular basis.

On the final day of the convention, attendees had



photo by Jim Cole



bleacher seats to watch the annual Circus City Parade. Appearing in the parade were wagons from both the Circus Hall of Fame as well as from the Peru Youth Circus plus many dignitaries.

There was a tour of the Miami County Museum Circus exhibit later that day, exploring the involvement of the American Indian in the circus.

The final event of the convention was the Annual Banquet of the International Circus Hall of Fame and the Circus Historical Society, which included the induction ceremony to the Hall of Fame. Following a splendid meal, Maureen

Brunsdale presented the 2013 Stuart L. Thayer Award for Circus History to Frederik L. Schodt for his book, *Professor Risley and the Imperial Japanese Troupe*. Next Tom Dunwoody, the Director of the International Circus Hall of Fame, formally inducted Jacqueline Zerbini into the Circus Hall of Fame. The evening concluded with Zerbini's fascinating talk about her experiences in the circus.

With that, the 2013 Circus Historical Society convention wrapped up, after three days filled with live circus performances, fascinating discussions of circus history, and visits with friends old and new. **BW**



Above, Judy Griffin (left) and Maureen Brunsdale present the Stuart Thayer Award to Frederik L. Schodt.

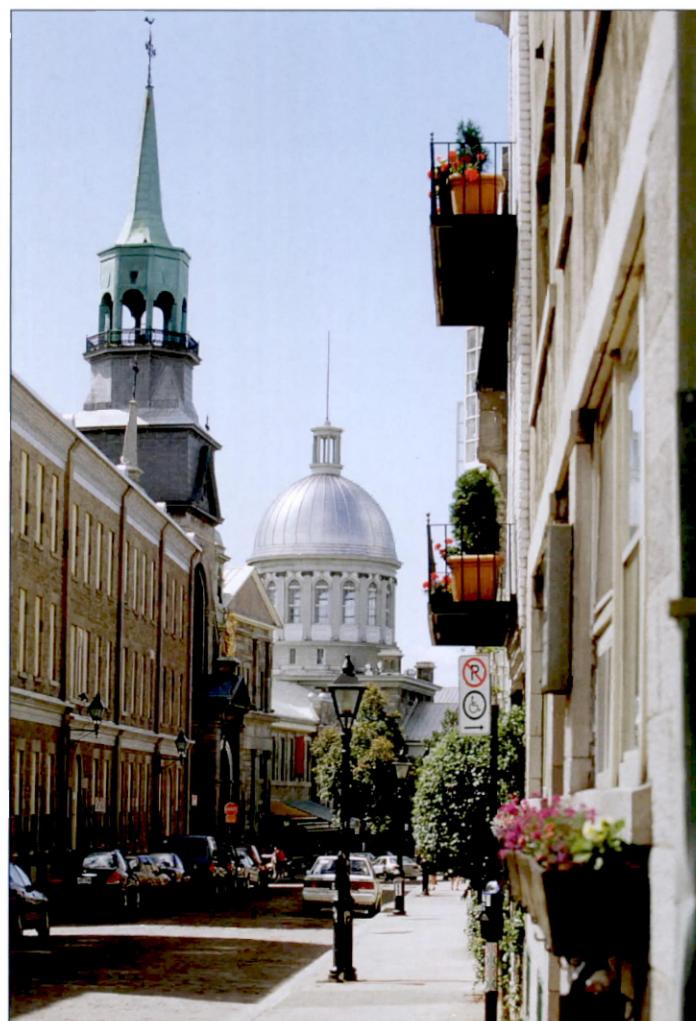
We are in Montreal, Quebec, Canada

July 10-12, 2014!

by Al Stencell

CHS conventioneers are in for a busy, eye-opening three days in Canada's Cultural Capital, Montreal. Highlights of the convention will include the opportunity to experience The Montreal Circus Festival; the Pascal Jacobs's circus collection; and visit TOHU, a center for performance, creativity, and experimentation in the circus arts. Attendees will also visit Canada's National Circus School and a limited group of 50 people will tour the world headquarters of Cirque du Soleil. Be sure to register early to be part of this unique opportunity.

The Montreal Circus Festival celebrates its third year with more than a dozen city venues as well as performances in TOHU, theatres, and clubs. Circus troupes like Cirque Eloise and 7 Fingers have been past features along with doz-



Old Montréal

© MTTQ/Linda Turgeon



Montreal Circus Festival Montreal Complément Cirque

ens of unique troupes and acts comprising jugglers, comics, acrobats, and aerialists working at extraordinary heights. The festival will have circus entertainment for every enthusiast of the circus arts.

Our time at the vast library and archives of NCS will include a forum discussion on circuses. The city is home to The Montreal Working Group on Cirque/Circus Research. This dedicated group of entertainment scholars meets regularly to discuss and mingle with others working on circus projects. There is also a Quebec Circus History support group which is publishing a new book, *Cirque Global: the Expanding Boundaries of Quebec Circus*. Besides the NCS, Montreal is the home of the National Theatre School of Canada and the National Film Board, the world's leading documentary film producer.

On the waterside in the heart of "old historic Montreal," Cirque du Soleil will open its new tent show, *KURIOS-Cabinet of Curiosities*. The director and writer is Michel Lapise and Chantal Tremblay is the director of creation. The press notice announces: "Step into the curio cabinet of an ambitious inventor who defies the laws of time, space, and dimension in order to reinvent everything around him. Suddenly the visible becomes invisible, perspectives are transformed, and the world is literally turned upside down in a place that's as beautiful as it is mysterious. *KURIOS* is an ingenious blend of unusual curiosity acts and stunning acrobatic prowess from Cirque du Soleil."

CHS members should be aware that American citizens will need a U.S. passport, a U.S. passport card, a Trusted Traveler Card (NEXUS), or Enhanced driver's license (EDL) to enter Canada and to return to the U.S. Also keep in mind that French is the official language of Montreal and U.S. dollars will need to be exchanged for Canadian dollars. More



TOHU

National Circus School Montreal

details about the logistics of planning for the convention can be found on the CHS website, along with a link to the convention hotel, the Auberge Royal Versailles.

Join us in Montreal for three days full of all things circus. Arranged around our paper sessions, banquet, auction, and special tours, attendees will see a performance of *KURIOS* and as many Montreal Circus Festival events as we can fit into the schedule. Throw in a fabulous city noted for

its nightlife, arts, fashion, and food plus a cobble stone historic old town beside the St. Lawrence River and you have one of the most spectacular conventions that CHS has ever planned for its members.

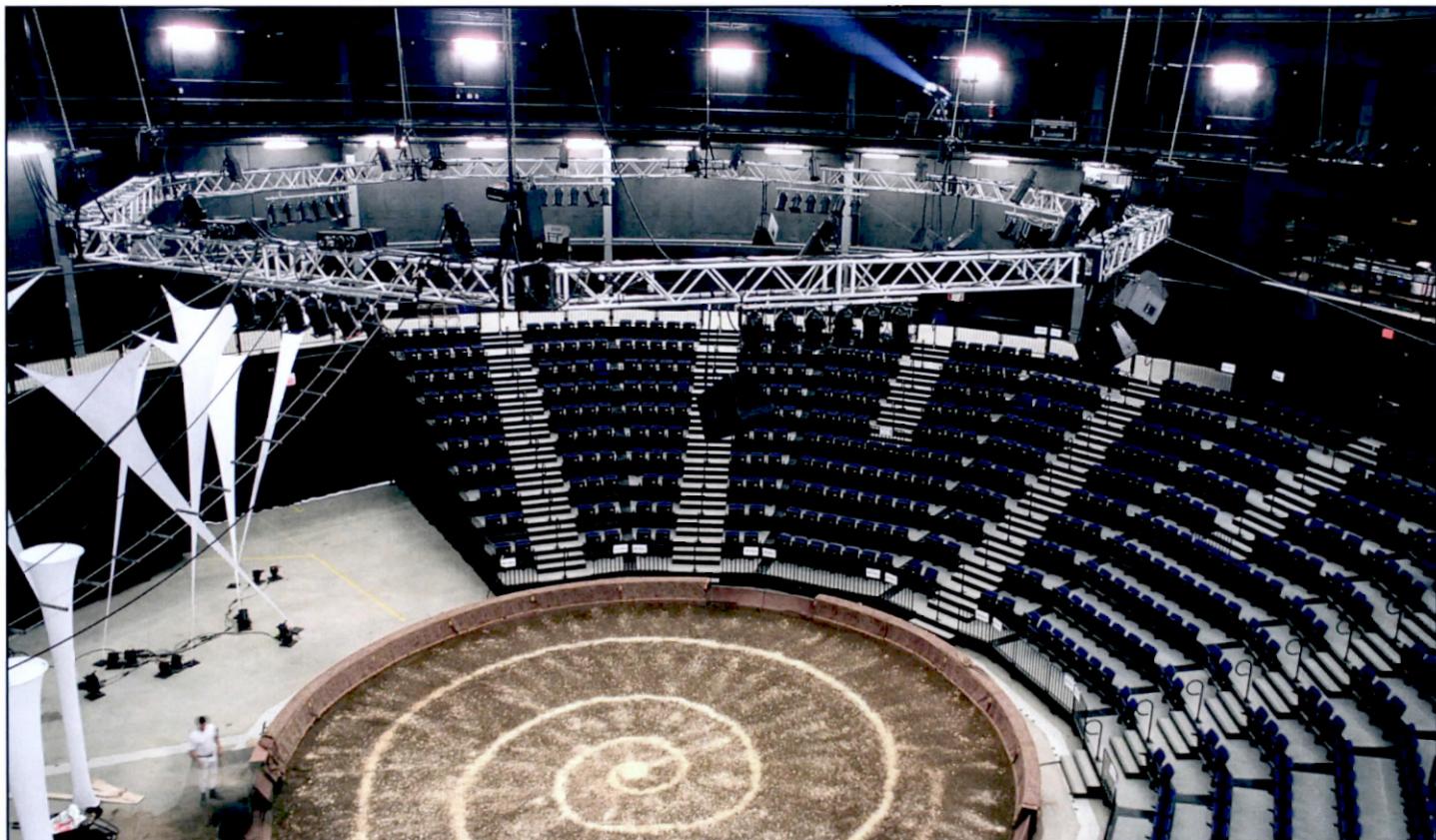
Book your rooms now.

Be there when the whistle blows!

For more information, visit the CHS website:
circushistory.org/conference/convention.htm **BW**

7e Ciel tm at Cirque du Soleil

© Cirque du Soleil



A book review...

Der Zirkus kommt!

by Volkhard Stern

The book is horizontal format, 8.25 x 11.5", 128 pages, hardbound, and lists for 35.00 Euros. Freiburg: EKVerlag GmbH, 2012, ISBN 978-3-88255-889-0.

review by Fred Dahlinger, Jr.

Why, some will ask, is a review of a German language book the first one to be reviewed in *Bandwagon* since 1978? It's testimony to the fact that a contrast with something very familiar can bring about new understanding and insights by providing perspectives that are "out of the box." This reviewer's thinking was stimulated far beyond the basic subject matter, which was very well presented. With an obvious interest in the American railroad circus, I found the subject volume to be an excellent piece of work, with substantial text and an abundance of high quality black-and-white and color illustrations.

Stern's volume focuses on the post-World War I German circuses that moved by rail. There are just two pre-1900 engravings and a few pages on the Barnum & Bailey visit in 1900-1901. Some of the challenges of touring during the Third Reich are presented. Then comes liberal coverage of generally familiar German shows with names like Barum, Busch, Hagenbeck, Krome, Sarrasani, and so on, up to today's Roncalli. A valuable feature of the book is a three and a half page listing of German circuses that moved by rail after 1945.

Much in the volume will catch attention, illustrating the differences with American railroad circus operations of the past and present. Of primary importance, other than three specially-built elephant cars commissioned by Krone in 1925, the trains conveying German shows consisted of cars furnished by the carriers. End-loading was possible in some locations, but for

the most part, show wagons were rolled off onto freight docks paralleling the tracks. The flat cars in use had sides that pivoted downward, bridging the gap from the car deck to the platform. Railroads had their own preferred methodologies. In addition to the usual wagons with small diameter wheels or pneumatic tires, which were adequate to German street and show lot conditions, the book includes some coverage of Circus Althoff-Williams, whose containers were loaded directly onto flats and semi-trailers.

The photography will make transportation analysts very happy, but there is also frequent use of posters, photographs of animals and personnel, and some lot scenes. The railroad views cover the gamut: en route behind steam, diesel, and electric power; movements in the yards; loading and unloading with horses, elephants and a variety of trucks and tractors; and more.

Don't look for sleepers here; unless show folks remained in their living wagons on the flats, they took regularly scheduled passenger trains or drove overland between engagements. The railroad advance car was also unknown, other than that of Barnum & Bailey. There is no coverage of non-German circuses moving in Germany. The transport of fairground apparatus was not addressed; the author adhered to his title.

Yes, the text is in German, but there are numerous facts that can be readily discerned. The author thoughtfully included a date in nearly every informative caption. There is a bibliography at the end, mostly German language books, and no index. **Bw**



A book review...

Professor Risley and the Imperial Japanese Troupe

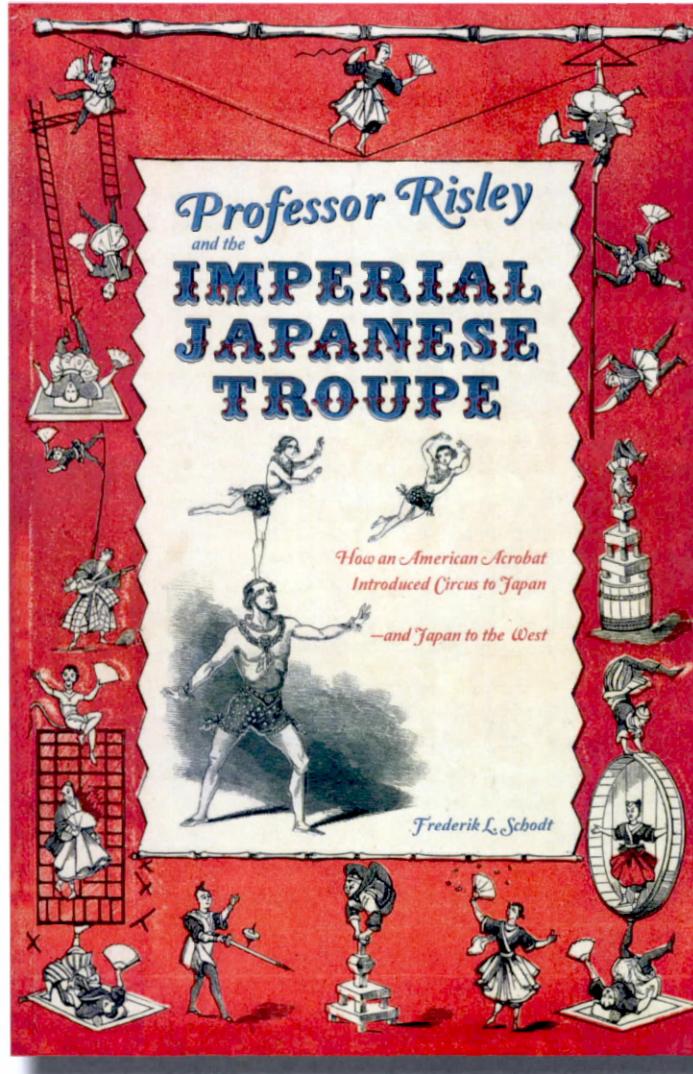
How an American Acrobat Introduced Circus to Japan—and Japan to the West

by Frederik Schodt

Schodt, Frederik L. Professor Risley and the Imperial Japanese Troupe; How an American acrobat introduced circus to Japan—and Japan to the West. Berkeley, California, Stone Bridge Press, 2012. 304 p., illus. \$35.00 ISBN 978-1-61172-009-9.

review by Herb Ueckert

One of the most interesting and significant works on the circus published in 2012 is Frederick Schodt's new book (see the excerpt printed in *Bandwagon*, July-August 2012, pp. 56-62).



Schodt is a scholar and the author of a number of books on Japanese history, life, and culture. He became intrigued with the story of "Professor" Risley (born Richard Risley Carlisle and hereafter referred to simply as Risley) who is credited with introducing the Western style circus to Japan and bringing Japanese entertainment to America. He is also credited with the development of the "Risley" act—the acrobatic feat of balancing, manipulating, and tossing another person with the feet (as opposed to the foot juggling of non-human objects).

Risley was born about 1814 in New Jersey, but he always called Philadelphia his home. Like many, he was attracted to the theater and performed the gymnastic act of juggling another person (allegedly his own young children) using the feet. Risley traveled to and performed in England and other European venues, but he was drawn to California in 1855 where the earlier discovery of gold and the ensuing gold rush could not be ignored. His travels with the Joseph Andrew Rowe Circus and other shows are related in the text, and he soon crossed the pacific to New Zealand, Australia, India, Shanghai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Manila. It is especially interesting to note that in an era when most persons grew up, worked, lived, and died within fifty miles of their birthplace, Risley managed to traverse vast distances. Exposure to different societies and cultures with differences in customs, language, food, and monetary exchange must have been interesting, too.

But it was Risley's arrival in Yokohama, Japan in 1864 that marked a turning point in his life. Japan then was pretty much closed to the West, but Risley nevertheless managed to introduce Western-style circus. Conversely, he observed Japanese style performers whom he eventually recruited and brought to the West. In fact, the first passports to leave Japan were issued by the government to Risley's performers. Indeed, his Imperial Japanese Troupe took San Francisco by storm and led to the rage in Japanese entertainment of acrobats and jugglers across America although technically another group of Japanese entertainers had reached California shortly before Risley's Imperial Japanese Troupe. Perhaps the most famous member of the Troupe was "Little All Right" who captivated audiences.

Risley's adventures and travels with the Troupe continued to England and other European cities. It seems that Westerners could not get enough of all things Japanese. Sadly, however, all stories end, and Risley's death in a lunatic asylum in Philadelphia in 1874 marked the end of his colorful and complicated life. He will no doubt be best remembered for the "Risley" act, still performed in circuses, and for introducing circus to Japan and the Japanese style of entertainment to the world.

The book is highly recommended and was indeed the worthy recipient of the Stuart Thayer Prize from the Circus Historical Society. **Bw**



A FAMILY CHRISTMAS-FEAST AT OLYMPIA.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1889.—Printed and Published by JAMES HENDERSON, at Red Lion House, Red Lion-court, Fleet-street, London.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

The Ringling Museum, Tibbals European Circus Collection

A Family Christmas-Feast at Olympia

The Greatest Show on Earth in London, 1889

by Kelly Zacovic

From the moment the mammoth company of P. T. Barnum's "Greatest Show on Earth" arrived in London for its 1889 stay at the Olympia, it was established as a spectacle that would completely overwhelm the senses of the eager British public. Never before had a show with such breadth, one that combined circus, menagerie, and sideshow under one roof graced the British stage. And overwhelm and excite it did; over the course of the show's three month run, visitors felt compelled to return time and again in order to absorb all of the sights and sounds the show had to offer.

Along with the more than 450 performers, 300 horses, 21 elephants, and 150 cages of exotic animals that travelled with the show, Barnum also brought the American-style three-ring circus format with him when he crossed the Atlantic. The hippodrome at Olympia had to be specially modified in order to accommodate the vastness of the performance spectacle, and the vast number of people keen on witnessing it.

For the one or two shilling entrance fee, visitors to the Olympia were amazed at the value the show provided. Four-in-hand horse, camel and even moose races were run around a hippodrome track; animals, contortionists, equestrians, and aerialists performed from inside the three rings; clowns roamed the track entertaining with their comedic routines. The grandest performance of all was the concluding "ballet," *Nero; or, The Destruction of Rome*, produced and directed by Imre Kiralfy. This pantomime featured over a thousand performers in splendid costumes, a large number of the show's animals for the staging of gladiatorial combat, pyrotechnic displays, complex artistic scenery, and a musical score composed by Angelo Venanzi, staged in order to recreate all of the glory of Ancient Rome. Before and after the show, guests were invited to walk through the menagerie as well as the sideshow, showcasing giants, Lilliputians, bearded ladies, conjurors, and other human performers. At the north end of the menagerie stood Jumbo, both his skeleton and his skin in all its taxidermy glory, finally returned to his homeland, just as the showman promised.

Accounts of visits to the show shortly after its opening present a variety of opinions on the circus performance and its venue, but all share one common theme: a sense of wonder, amazement, and sensory overload. One account entitled, "Barnum Revisited" in *The Era* recounts the author's second visit to the show:

"The bewildering nature of Mr. Barnum's show at Olympia makes it impossible to take in at one visit, or describe in anything like detail the multifarious attractions of the exhibition. It is possible to conquer to a certain degree the almost distractingly numerous items of the 'greatest show on earth'¹

Another reporter wrote of the three rings of simultaneous action: "attempting to grasp them all is to get tremendously 'mixed.'² He goes on to conclude: "There was not a voice to dispute the boast of Barnum that he has brought among us 'the greatest show on earth.'³

The show that Barnum put on in the Olympia exhibition hall was a dizzying and impressive one; no doubt worthy of its bombastic title, but perhaps the most sought-after spectacle of all was Barnum himself. Contrary to his prior reputation for being a "Yankee Humbug" or "shameless hypocrite," on this tour of London, the circus proprietor was joyfully received in social circles all across the city, likened frequently to "Jolly Old King Cole".⁴

In (this featured) engraving entitled *A Family Christmas-Feast at Olympia*, printed December 28, 1889, we can catch a glimpse of some of the grandeur, diversity, and even chaos that the show brought to the London performance scene. Members of the 'living museum' of oddities like James W. Coffey, the skeleton man, the bearded lady, Annie Jones and three midgets gather together around a feast table. A female snake charmer (likely, Miss Uno) sits next to two Zulus, identifiable by her hairstyle and of course, her penchant to accessorize with snakes. Two giants in cowboy garb stick out above their fellow performers, bringing the spirit of the American West to the gathering. Seven costumed elephants, three camels, four tuxedoed chimpanzees, two horses, and two giraffes also crowd around the group. In the background, keepers feed the caged animals, receiving help from elephants who hoist meats up to them. All present in the foreground, along with P.T. Barnum himself, raise a toast to the viewer. On the table, among other delicacies sits a large, flaming plum pudding sculpted into a portrait of the circus proprietor.⁵

From the subtle reminder included on a chimpanzee's pocket, the congress of sideshow performers, and the over-the-top plum pudding portrait, it is clear that the artist of *A Family Christmas Feast* is sending the message that even the show's Christmas feast was a spectacle worthy of Barnum's bombastic show title. Whether it be a dazzling number of performers, an expansive menagerie, or a company meal, every aspect of Barnum's production was designed to fit the title "Greatest Show on Earth", and that is precisely how the people of London perceived it. **Bw**

1. November 23, 1889

2. "Barnum's Show at Olympia", *The Era*, November 16, 1889

3. *ibid.*

4. A. H. Saxon. P. T. Barnum, *The Legend and the Man*, p. 322

5. The pudding is identifiable by an excerpt from *New York Clipper*, January 4, 1890. "Everybody connected with the Barnum & Bailey Shows ate his plum pudding in London on Christmas."

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April 1977

THE BARNUM BAILEY

AND GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

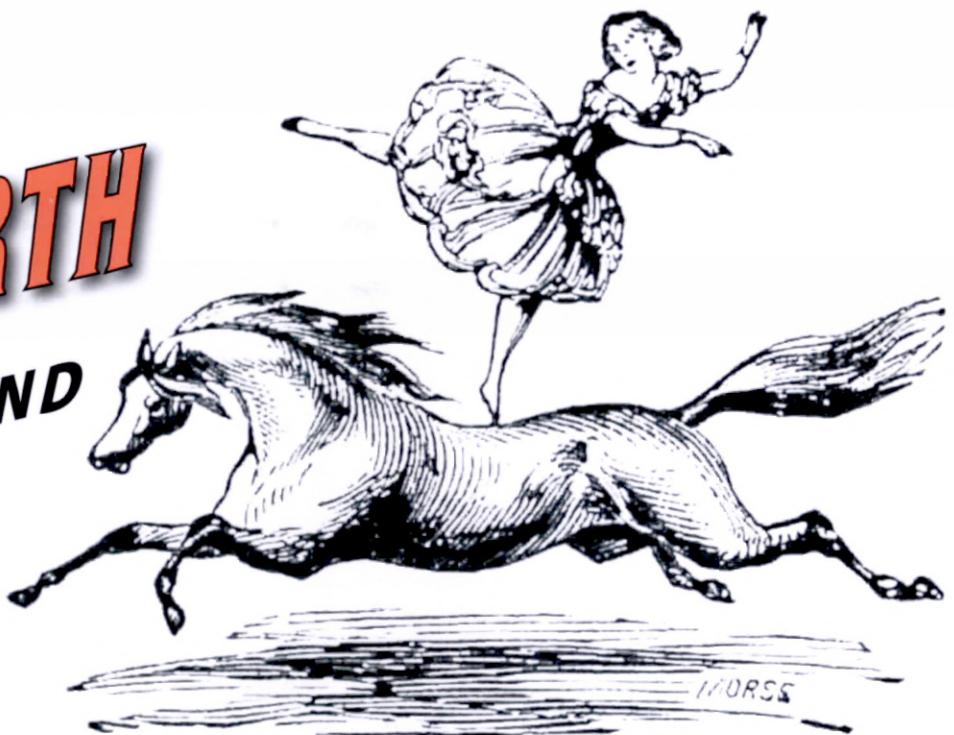


ROSE WENTWORTH

THE ONLY LADY RIDER
TURNING SOMERSAULTS.

ROSE WENTWORTH

A CIRCUS LEGEND



by John Daniel Draper

It was circus day in 1889 in Bridgeport, Connecticut when the Barnum & Bailey band struck up a lively march and Rose Wentworth, "The Only Lady Rider Turning Somersaults" entered the ring. She smiled to the audience as her beautiful white horse galloped past the crowd. Here was the legend of a little girl of eight years, born in Fall River, Massachusetts, who played in the London, England production of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Rose was picked by Bailey from a cast of 300 dancers to join Barnum & Bailey Circus as their youngest dancer at the age of 12. She was only five feet tall but she could dance rings around the others.

Papa Bailey took her back to America and made her a star. He approved of her marriage to Harry Wentworth at the age of 14 and said "Harry would take care of me when we were on the road." Harry was Barnum and Bailey's puckish clown who received letters from thousands of children who had seen him cavort in the big top. Rose had told Harry she was 16 when they were married. She was afraid he wouldn't marry her if he knew she was so young. All of the circus folk came to the wedding as did P. T. Barnum and James Bailey. The wedding was in America at a Roman Catholic Church so that Harry's mother could be in attendance.

Before starting a long run of performances on Barnum & Bailey, Rose was on the Adam Forepaugh show for the 1893 season. She was heralded as the English rose, artistic, queen of contortionists, and a most pleasing little lady. Her husband, Harry Wentworth, was the "King of Folly". He had

a funny pig and monkey act and was a contortionist, a virtual human anaconda. He had been with the Barnum organization since 1886 including their showing at Olympia in London in 1889. He had a partner, Maud Allington (known as Maud Wentworth), who was a principal rider and contortionist. Harry was an artistic clown, gorgeous in his black and gold suit. He would hitch one of his educated pigs to a small cart and "Would a driving Go". He always held the chair while his pretty wife bent back over it in the wonderful way in which he had taught her. She learned to do the trapeze by practicing on a low level wire. Then one day she had to take someone else's place. At a high level she did alright the first time but the second time she fell. She never did that again. In riding, the thought of being injured never entered Rose's mind.

The routine after arrival at the circus grounds meant a parade at 10 o'clock which lasted for one to one and a half hours. Then there was lunch and an afternoon performance with a rest of several hours including dinner before the night show. The women usually spent a short time together, enjoying pursuits such as afternoon tea, sewing and talk. Sometimes circus folks got tired of this hard, never ending routine, but if they gave it up, they would always come back to it. They were all alike in one big family.

Sometimes Rose was asked about the best preparation for equestrian work. Here is how she answered. "I think part of my success is due to my long apprenticeship in dancing. Some of the new students of this act think it is all a matter of quickness and balance; but there is a good deal more in it than that. There must be a style and dash which nothing

Left, Strobridge Lithographing Company, circa 1897.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection

but a long practice in graceful movement can give. You must be something more than an ordinary trick rider to make the people enthusiastic."

Rose performed with Barnum & Bailey from 1894 to 1905. She crossed the Atlantic a number of times with the show and had the happiest life imaginable, meeting royalty who came to her tent. Kings stayed after the performance to tell her that they had never seen such riding. Bailey paid a thousand dollars for her white horse.

In the spring of 1894 at the show's quarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Rose Wentworth was practicing her riding acts and, while demonstrating a thrilling dash around the ring, was given a dangerous fall, landing on her back considerably stunned. John O'Brien, Frank Melville and Harry Amphlett, in the ring at the time, rushed to her rescue, helped her to mount her horse again



HARRY WENTWORTH

Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1905.



ROSE WENTWORTH,

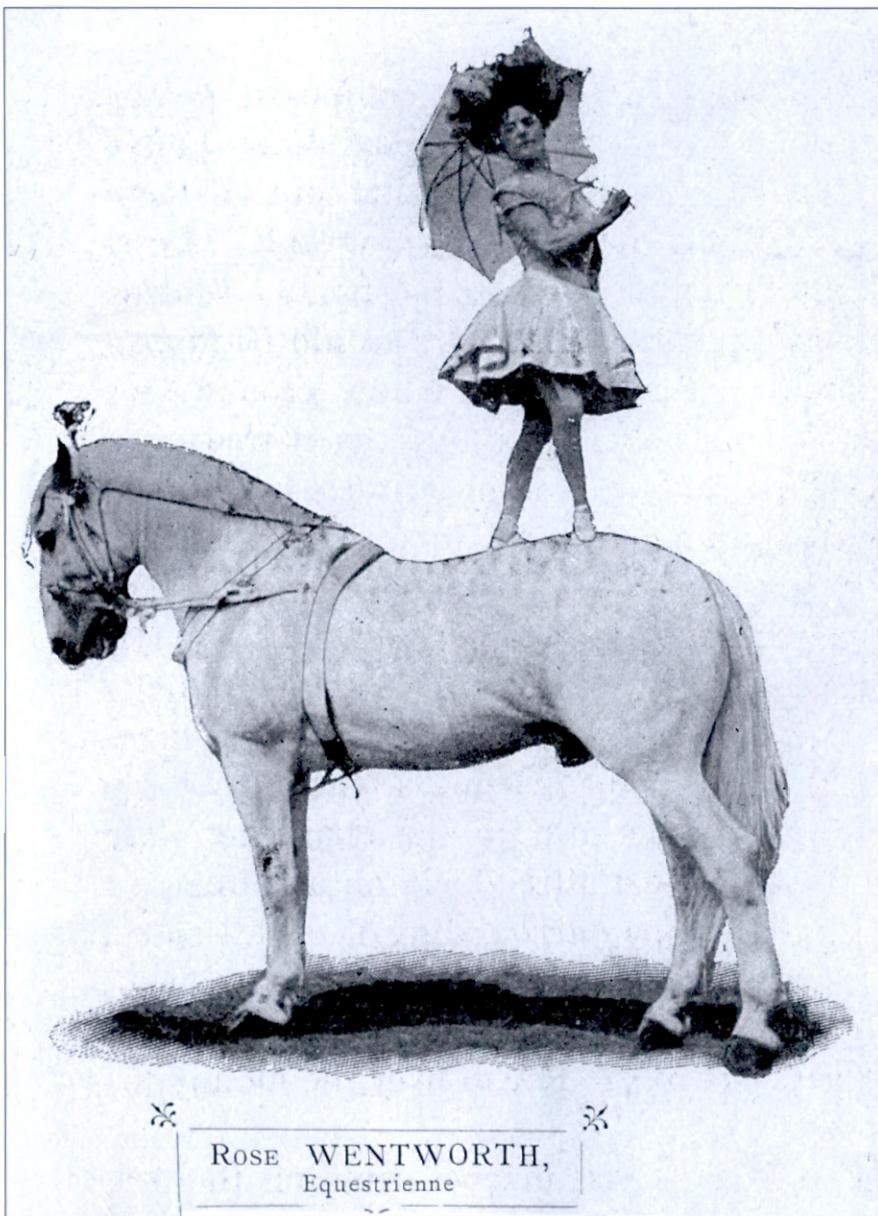
Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1897.

and she completed her series of stunts for the news scribes.

In the 1894 program Rose and Harry performed as aerialists. Rose did daring feats on the single swing trapeze. Harry was a leaper and tumbler, a contortionist, and worked with a trained pig and monkey. At Hartford, Connecticut on June 1st Maud Wentworth rode a carrying act with the Seaberts in good form and at Canton, Ohio on July 17th Herbert and Wentworth's carrying act proved attractive and was liberally applauded.

For 1895 Rose was both a principal equestrienne and a lady jockey rider (1 of 5). In display #5 Harry had his highly educated pigs. Except for some early aerial presentations and contortion acts that were presented as late as 1897, all of her work after 1895 focused on bareback equestrianism.

Harry had a troupe of educated pigs in 1896 and Rose and Harry did refined contortion feats. Maud rode in the ladies jockey race with Misses Emma White, Ella Potter, Lizzie Seabert, and Minnie Johnson. In one of the three bareback acts Rose did a champion principal act with ease and marked ability and did many of the most daring and novel features, an acme of perfection. At Portland, Maine on July 31st she rode the horse once ridden by John Stetson's wife, Katie Stokes, when she was in the ring. The



Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1901.

horse "Duke" was getting old but he was a good horse yet.

For 1897 women equestriennes were introduced in each ring. Josie Ashton did trick riding. Rose Wentworth gave her somersault specialities and Miss Ouika Meers did a principal bareback act. In the center ring with Miss Wentworth, the lady clown, Miss Seabert, entertained with a pleasing routine.

In 1898 Rose appeared for a short time on John Robinson's Circus. The 1898 program for the provincial tour of Barnum & Bailey in England was the same as at Olympia. "New women" were supreme in the arena. There were three equestrian acts assisted by four lady clowns, lady ringmasters, and girls in bloomers representing the New Woman of the 20th century. The riders this time were Rose Wentworth, Josie Ashton and Appolonia Orford. Harry Wentworth presented a baby elephant.

The year 1899 in England at Olympia featured the agile double convulsions and contortions of Maud and Harry Wentworth as well as the clowning of Harry. Maud Wentworth was also in the ladies jockey race, three times

around the track. The participants, in addition to Maud, were Lizzie Seabert, Emma White, Minnie Johnson, Myrtle Del Fuego and Belle Irene. In the principal act there was a combination of skill. The double female bareback jockey act concluded with a simultaneous double leap from the ground to the back of a single horse by Rose Wentworth and Amelia Feeley.

Barnum & Bailey's 1900-1901 season was in Vienna where Rose, Maud, and Harry Wentworth were performers. Harry did clowning in both Vienna and the Netherlands and Rose did bareback riding in both of these locations also.

Back in America in 1901, Rose did a principal act and double jockey act with Fred Derrick on Barnum & Bailey while Harry did his clowning. They continued with the same program in 1902 on Barnum & Bailey. In the 1903 and 1904 seasons they performed as the Wentworth Trio with trick riding in a series of entirely new, dashing, and daring equestrian acts with running horses and the English road cart. Rose Wentworth was proclaimed to be the world's indisputably greatest equestrienne



MRS. MAUD WENTWORTH

Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1905.



Rose Wentworth, Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1903.

presenting the one absolutely original and up-to-date riding and driving feature of 1904. Something was new every year. It was the best dressed riding act on earth and had all of the latest Parisienne modes on horseback. There was a superb blending of grace, beauty, style, and startling novelty. In display #11 Rose rode in a double jockey act with Rooney. Harry was advertised in a courier for 1904 as the original clown photographer, skillful rider and inventive

artist, recently returned from seven years as principal star in circuses all over Europe. In the fall the Wentworth Trio, Wilkes Lloyd, Pauline Violi, Fred Ledgett, and Dallie Julian, well known riders, and the English clown, Sam Watson, were re-engaged on Barnum & Bailey for 1905. In November the Rose Wentworth Trio of equestrians were playing vaudeville houses. They opened their vaudeville engagements with Hyde & Beelman's in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1905 Rose and Harry were in their usual roles on Barnum & Bailey. In addition Harry & Maud were riding a bareback act. The Wentworth-Derrick Trio was performing an acrobatic horse and cart act. Rose executed a fearless somersault from the back of the horse to the cart while both were in motion.

In March of 1906 Rose Wentworth was performing the cart act with Gilbert Eldred in vaudeville.

There is a photo of Rose standing with one foot on the neck of the horse which is hitched to the cart. There is a man in the cart with a dog. Rose Wentworth with her equestrian novelty was in great favor in vaudeville. She was a graceful, attractive, and skilled horsewoman. She was assisted by Gilbert Eldred who did wonderful and original tricks with skill and ease. The act employed three white horses. The pair of riders did capital somersault

work from the cart to the horse's back.

On July 21, 1906 there was the following ad: "Rose Wentworth's Equestrian Novelty, Premier Equestrienne. Address Harry Wentworth, c/o Billboard, N. Y. C."

Rose Wentworth performed with Circo Pubillones in Cuba in 1907. Gilbert Eldred was with her cart act that year. Looking for employment for 1908, she sent a series of letters to Ringling Bros. asking for possible employment:

Hotel "Flor de Cuba", Havana, Nov. 4, 1907

Mr. Al Ringling
Dear Sir

Do you want the Rose Wentworth Equestrian Act. Have wrote and got no Answer. Also sent photos. I should like to know as soon as possible as I have some other offer. Opened here with Pubillones Circus and have made quite a big Hit. Hoping to hear from you whether you want the Act or not, I remain yours

Truly
Rose Wentworth
Pubillones Circo
Havana
Cuba

Havana, Nov. 14th, 1907

Mr. Al Ringling
Ringling Circus
Baraboo, Wis.

Mr. Ringling

Dear Sir

Since hearing from you last, I have made quite a change in my work. Mr. Eldred will not be with me after Friday Nov. 16th. So if you want to engage me alone I can give you the Cart Act just the same if you have a rider there that will go in my act. Will also give you principal and jockey act, single or double, everything first class. My Salary is 125.00 One Hundred and twenty five Dollars. Also Mr. Wentworth to do General Clowning all through the show like he done with the Barnum Show. His Salary 65.00 Sixty five Dollars. Hoping to hear from you by return mail or telegram I remain yours

Truly,
Rose Wentworth
Circo Pubillones
Cafe Central
Havana Cuba

P. S. Kindly Answer in haste as it requires quite a time to get things ready for the Opening.

Dec. 17/07
Circo Pubillones
Cafe Central
Havana, Cuba

Mr. Al Ringling:

Dear Sir-

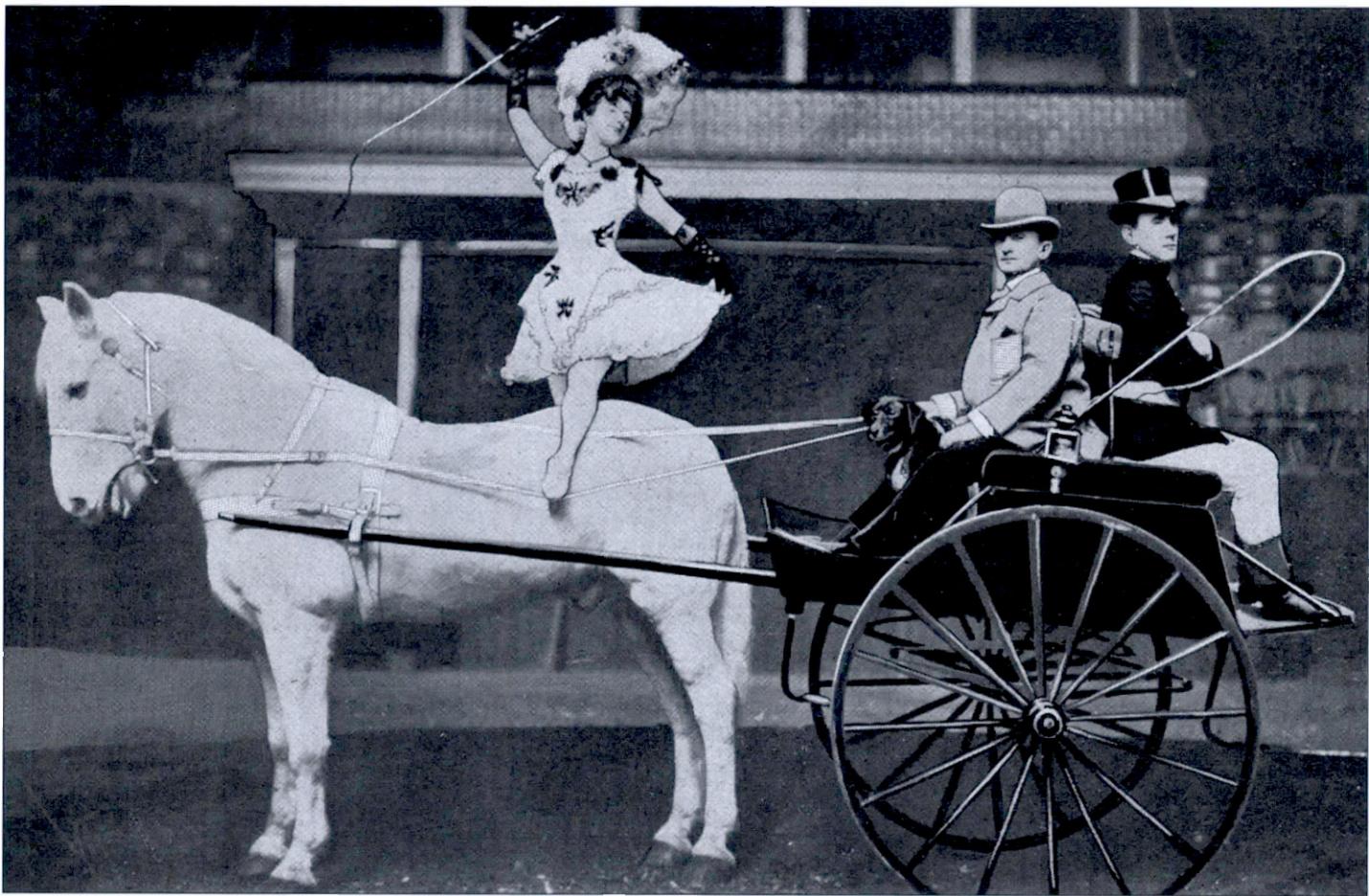
Have wrote you a couple of letters, can you use my Acts for the coming season. If so should be very pleased to hear from you. Mr. Eldred is not with me anymore. He left because he wouldn't do more than one act a night down here in this country. They want lots of changes here I have four different Acts which I change nightly. The Pubillones are very well pleased with my work and if you wish for a recommendation in regards to it should be very pleased if you would write to them. They can inform you about my horses and work alone. Also if you need Mr. Wentworth for clowning in regards to his Ability you know it. Hoping to hear from you I remain yours.

Very truly,
Mrs. Rose Wentworth
Circo Pubillones
Cafe Central
Havana, Cuba

P. S. We wish you all A Merry Christmas

The Wentworths were employed by Ringling Bros. Circus in 1908 in the red program format. This was the only season they were on Ringling Bros. That year Rose showed poise and ability in handling a steed of mettle. She gave a magnetic demonstration of difficult equestrianism. Daisy Hodgini (really Albert Hodgini) performed a double act with Rose in the center ring of display #5. In the end rings were Miss M. Van and Miss Emma Stickney.

In April of 1909 Rose Wentworth and Ouika Meeers were doing a double equestrian act at the New York Hippodrome. Later that year Rose Wentworth joined Spellman Shows at Toledo, Ohio and opened August 23rd at the Great King Wamba Celebration. The dainty little lady made a decidedly big hit in her principal act and was a bright particular star of the Spellman organization for the balance of the season. It was a new experience for Miss Wentworth to give her act as a free performance in the open. Her audience was limited only by the size of the grounds and she said, "I liked it". Thousands applauded her to the echo at the King Wamba Carnival.



Rose Wentworth, Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1903.



Rose Wentworth, Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1903.



Harry Wentworth, Barnum & Bailey Route Book, 1901.



Frederick Glasier photographed Rose Wentworth on the circus lot, circa 1905.

Ringling Museum, Glasier Collection

In 1913 she joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West where she drove a buffalo in harness and participated in a buffalo race. Soon after this Rose retired from the circus ring. She married Edward Carr, a rancher and horse dealer. She went to New Mexico to live. In her frequent letters to friends back home she seemed to be happy and content. In every letter she stoutly denied the slightest inclination of lonesomeness for the business and explained that her new automobile, a present from her husband, had replaced all affection for bareback riding. A hundred and fifty mile trip was not considered of any consequence at all those days and when she grew tired of the auto she accompanied her husband on a round-

up. Recently he had killed three buffalo in one day while she was with him. These letters breathed a happiness and contentment. However, soon she did not like it anymore because it was too lonely there. She came back to Grove Avenue in Willow Grove where her parents lived. The Ringling management approached her to return to the circus but she refused. Ringling told her that there were no more women bareback riders. She agreed with him, saying that they were then all pad riders.

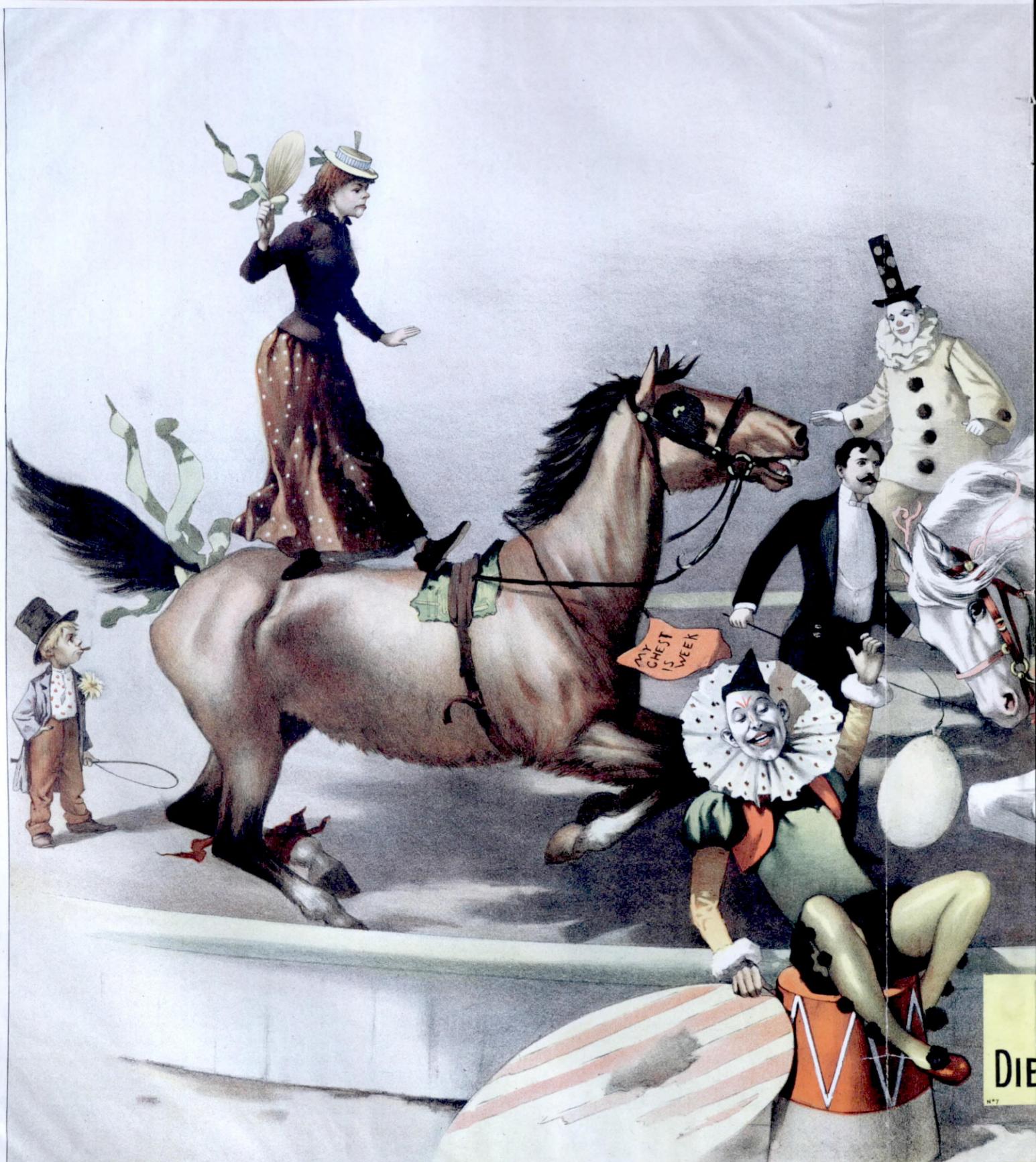
In December of 1925 Rose Wentworth gave a dinner party in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bradna and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Silbon at her beautiful home in Willow Grove, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Fourteen were in the party.

By 1934 Rose was evidencing some rather unorthodox religious views. Here is a transcript in her words: "First miracle 1934, our Lord ascending to heaven. Had to use it on account of cooking dog meat. Had kennel with 60 dogs. After washing the vision was gone. I felt terrible about it. So I used it again for a few days. Then to my surprise there was God's face so two miracles came on one pan. The long pan I never used. It stood on a shelf in the outer kitchen. Catherine Martin had come up from Philadelphia. She said Rose I am going to look at God's face. Then she called Rose you have got 2

more faces. I said where. She said on the cooking pan. I said that's a brand new pan. I never used it. They came Easter morning 9:15. Just came from Mass. Waiting for my coffee. Put 3 dogs out on the porch and looked up in the sky quite a long way. I saw what I thought was an airplane burning up and throwing rays of light."

Rose had always loved animals and she wanted them near her. In 1940 she had 60 dogs in her animal hospital at her home. When you opened the door the dogs barked, the parrots shrieked and the painted lithograph clowns smiled at you. Rose believed in being modern. She used lipstick and rolled her own cigarettes. **BW**

Die Barnum & Bailey Groesste S



DER WELT GRÖSSTES, GROSSARTIGSTES, BES

DIE

schaustellung der Welt

97. B-N° 7



AMÜSANTE REITERSSENE.
GESELLSCHAFTS-SCHÖNE UND DAS ARBEITSMÄDCHEN.

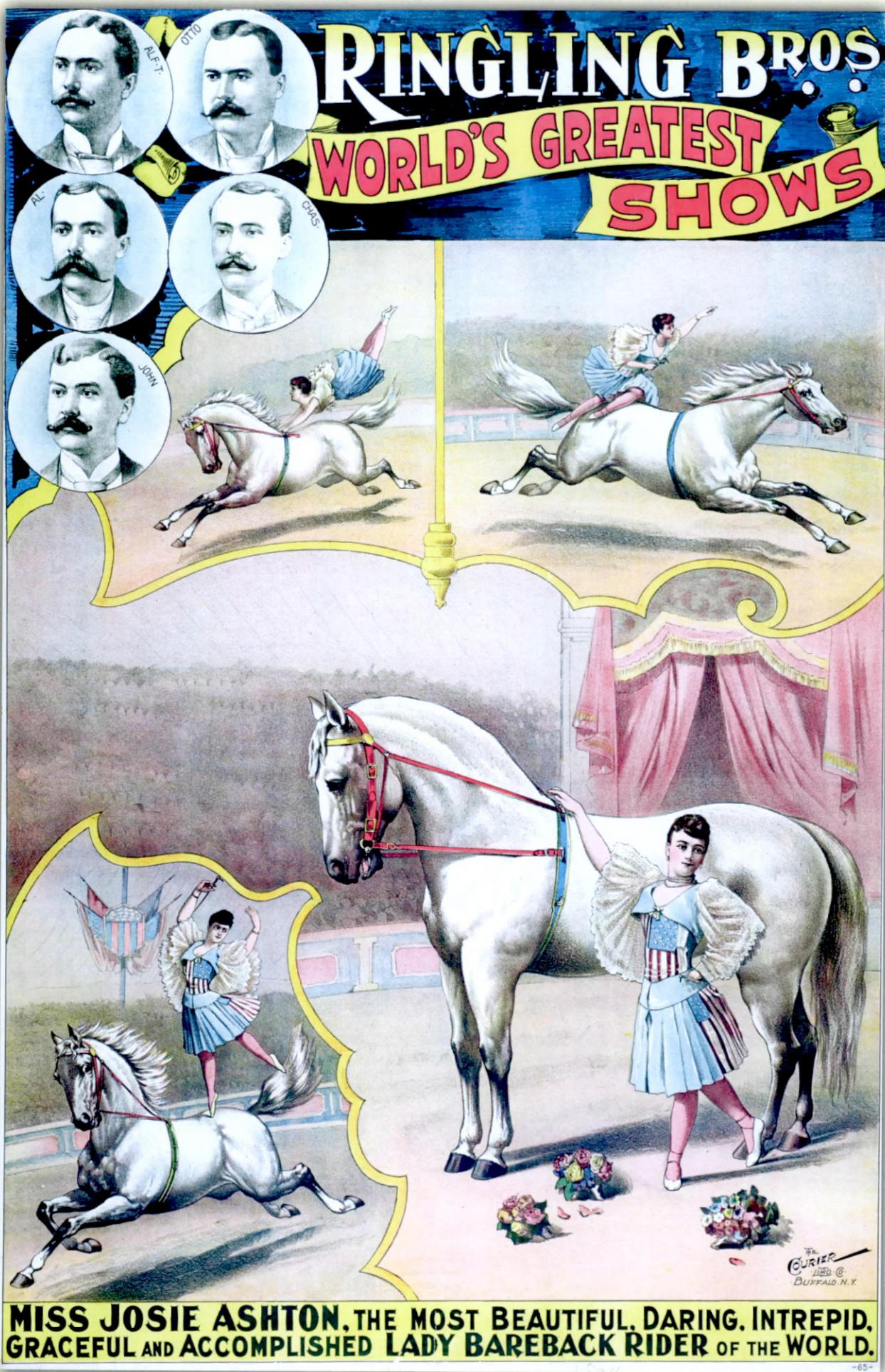
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THE
STROBRIDGE
LITH. CO.
CINCINNATI & NEW YORK.

PRINTED IN AMERICA

TES AMUSEMENTS-INSTITUT.

This poster, printed by Strobridge Lithographing Company for Barnum & Bailey, depicts acts that featured two of the show's greatest equestriennes, Josie Ashton and Rose Wentworth.

*Ringling Museum,
Tibbals Collection*



MISS JOSIE ASHTON, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL, DARING, INTREPID,
GRACEFUL AND ACCOMPLISHED LADY BAREBACK RIDER OF THE WORLD.

JOSIE ASHTON QUEEN OF THE ARENA

by John Daniel Draper

Josephine Gagnon was born in 1870 in Orange, New Jersey. She was to become through marriage to Frank Ashton (circa 1885) Josie Ashton, a famous principal rider on a number of prominent circuses. Even earlier she had bought retired James Robinson's ring horse for \$1200. It was said to be the most perfectly gaited horse that ever went into the ring. She kept him for many years.

Frank Ashton had previously been a gymnast and contortionist on a number of circuses: Thayer & Noyes (1864), O. S. Wheeler's (1865), New York Champs Elysees (1866) where he appeared as Master Frank Ashton, Haight & Wootten (1871), Smith & Baird (1872), Great Eastern (1874), L. B. Lent's (1876), posturing & leaper on Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson (1881-82).

In 1885 Josie and Frank both appeared on Sells Bros. Circus and in 1886 they were on Barnum & London Circus. Frank did a curious balancing feat on the high ladder and chair, reversing natural positions. Josie performed on the double high flying trapeze. On March 25th, 1887 Frank and Josie were back from a South American tour with the Gardner and Donovan Circus. After a brief interval, they joined Frank A. Robbins Circus where Josie Ashton did the cloud swing. They closed that engagement and joined Sells Bros. on June 2nd. On that show Josie was noted for her grace and daring on the flying rings. Sells Bros. was then on a lot in Quincy, Massachusetts quite near where the John Adams and John Quincy Adams homes were located.

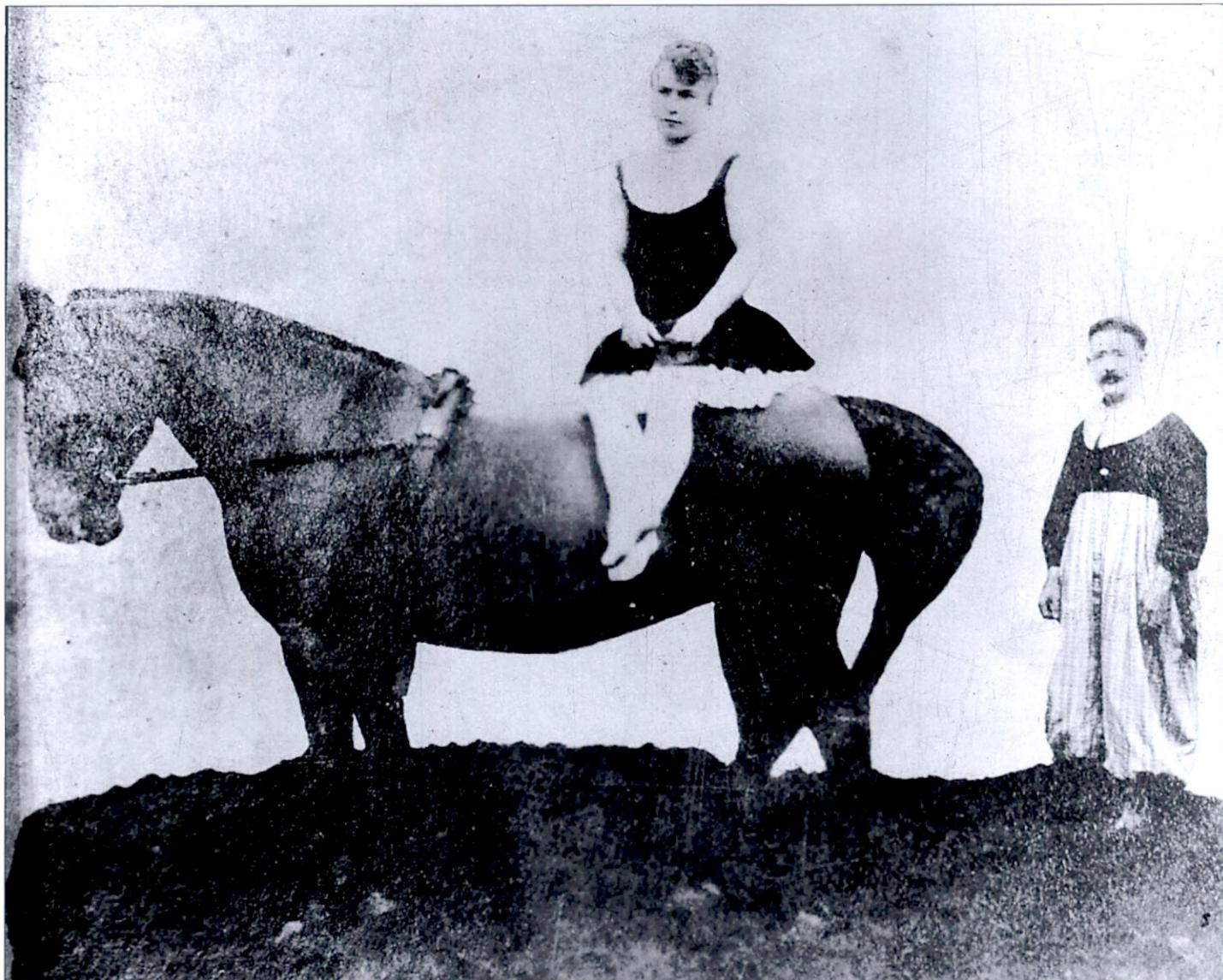
Starting in 1889 Josie Ashton rode as a principal bareback equestrienne on the Adam Forepaugh Circus for five

Left, this Courier Litho poster was created to advertise Josie Ashton's 1894 season on the Ringling show.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection



years. Addie Bell and Josie gave a thrilling bareback act. In 1890 she did athletic feats on that show. In December of 1890 Josie and Frank were both on Shipp's Winter Circus at Petersburg, Illinois. This was the fourth yearly season for that show. In 1891 they performed in Shipp and Ashton's New York Circus in the 8,000 seat coliseum in Omaha, Nebraska where Julia Lowande and Josie Ashton did splendid bareback riding. Edward Shipp did a bounding jockey act and Frank Ashton was also in the performance. Later in the season the Ashtons were on both Irwin Bros. Circus and the Donovan Circus. "Miss Josie Ashton showed her audience what 'bareback' riding really meant and as an equestrienne is in the foremost rank. Her jumping of the flags and through hoops while riding round the ring was characterized by daring and skill and she fully deserved the applause so liberally bestowed upon her by the spectators who were loud in their



Ashton, photographed with William Wallett, appeared as the principal bareback rider on the Forepaugh show for five seasons.

demands for an encore. Josie was as good upon the rings as in her bareback riding display and her gymnastics and graceful performance upon the hanging rope were productive of much enthusiasm." In 1892 Frank Ashton was listed as one of 19 leapers and tumblers on Adam Forepaugh. For 1893 Josie performed on the flying rings. In December she rode a bareback act for one week at Proctor's Ladies Club Theatre in New York City on 23rd Street near 6th Avenue. The program ran continuously from 10:00 AM until 10:30 PM daily.

On Ringling Bros. in 1894 Josie rode a principal bareback act and was billed as "Queen of the Arena". This season was the only one in which she ever appeared with Ringling Bros. Circus. She rode a coal black horse with white straps and check rein. W. B. Moffatt, an old trouper, stated that on the black principal bareback horse the rosin showed up like whitewash. Josie was the "most beautiful, intrepid,

graceful, and accomplished lady rider in the world exhibiting the highest act in the realms of female equestrianism. Nothing more effectively picturesque could be conceived than the petite young girl upon horseback, or poised upon one dainty foot, seeming to float in the air while the spirited animal beneath her dashed around the arena with the speed of the wind. Miss Ashton's act cannot be duplicated, and her weekly salary would pay the entire expenses of an ambitious show." The ring master was Ernest Melville and the object holders were Messrs. Leondor, Duval, and Aymar. The riding in the principal acts was interspersed with the "funniest of funny clowning" by Lew Sunlin, William West, Jules Turnour and Albert Gaston. Later in the show Josie performed on the flying rings between R#1 and R#2.

The next four years were spent with Barnum & Bailey on the flying rings, including the winter of 1898 in London at the Olympia Hippodrome. In 1895 Josie did delicate ex-

ploys on the pendulating rings and was the champion principal bareback equestrienne. "With the female clown is the ring-mistress who cracks the whip just like a man, keeps the equestrienne's horse at its proper gait and acts as a foil to the clown. Of course the woman clown and the ring-mistress got into the ring with a woman rider making a 'woman's number'. Josie Ashton is the equestrienne of the female trio."

The following year she was in a bareback act displaying rare charm and fearless equitation to which was added all the latest arenic accomplishments, showing perfect artistry in all lines. The Sheikas and the Potters, Herbert Geller, and Josie Ashton gave a series of original feats.

In 1897 Barnum & Bailey had two star equestriennes, Josie Ashton and Rose Wentworth. For this combination they had a very unique lithograph created, perhaps the most curious ever. It offered a striking contrast between equestriennes of two social classes. The one on the left was a work-



A cabinet card features Ashton, circa 1890.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection



Josie Ashton, circa 1905.

Ringling Museum, Glasier Collection

ing country girl, dressed in plain brown, riding a brown horse deliberately characterized as a broken down plow horse. Facing her was a girl from the upper class dressed as a lady with a bonnet and carrying a fan. Her horse was a pure white charger. The performers on the lithograph were nameless but their skills represent those of Josie Ashton and Rose Wentworth. Three clowns in striking clothes were cavorting about the scene. "The two greatest riders in Horse Sketches true/Of Paradise Alley and Fifthe Avenoo."

For the year of 1897 Josie Ashton was actually billed as a fearless principal bareback trick rider and flying rings performer. Rose Wentworth in that year was a principal bareback trick and somersault performer and contortionist. "New women" were supreme in the arena. There were three champion equestrian acts by three queens of the arena among whom was the only woman rider ever turning a somersault on the back of a horse assisted by two lady clowns, lady ringmasters, and 20th century girls in bloomers. Here



Ashton was photographed with the Potters, an aerial troupe on the Ringling show. Ringling Museum, Glasier Collection

was the only female principal bareback equestrian act with a somersault, Miss Rose Wentworth, with the clown Miss Seabert. Also there was the principal bareback act with Miss Ouika Meers and fearless trick riding by Miss Josie Ashton. "Such a sextette of equestrians as Showles, Rooney, Rose Meers, Rose Wentworth, Josie Ashton, and Lavater Lee could not be found in a long journey." The 1897-98 dates in London for Barnum featured in Display #4 the "New Woman Supreme" in the arena, three champion equestrian acts by three arena queens, Miss Appolonia Orford, Miss Rose Wentworth, and Miss Josie Ashton in surprising exhibitions of fearless trick riding. Clowning was done by Miss Seabert. The 1898 road tour in England featured the same new woman theme as for 1897. The riders were again Appolonia Orford, Rose Wentworth, and Josie Ashton.

On Adam Forepaugh-Sells Bros. in 1900 in display #8, Misses Josie Ashton and Marietta Correa gave exhibitions of principal equestrian feats. They were accomplished artists in the finished arenic novelties. Also, in display #13, there was a thrilling performance on the rings by little Miss Josie Ashton. That fall at Vicksburg, Mississippi Josie was a captivating champion equestrienne without rival in her peculiarly graceful style. Appearing with her on the same program were Oscar Lowande, Sam Bennett, William Gorman,

Mme. Devine, Fred Ledgett, Linda Jeal, and Dally Julian. Josie continued on Adam Forepaugh-Sells Bros. Circus for a second season in 1901. In December of 1901 Ernest Melville and Josie Ashton performed at "The Country Circus" at Blaney's Theater for the Police Benefit. Josie returned to Barnum & Bailey in 1902.

Early in 1903 she was at the New Temple Theatre in the circus portion of the program. The production was "A Night at the Circus". Other members of the cast were Ernest Melville and Charles Watson. Also that season Josie was at Col. Pete Conklin's Society Circus in New York City. She had her riding act in the hotel ballroom.

For the four seasons from 1905 through 1908, Josie Ashton appeared with Frank A. Robbins Circus. Also in 1905 she was at Luna Park in Coney Island. In her time with the Robbins show she partnered each year with John J. Rooney. He would first show a simple jockey act with the



Frederick W. Glasier photographed John J. Rooney and Josie Ashton on a circus lot, circa 1905.

Ringling Museum, Glasier Collection



Josie Ashton, seated on the back of her horse as photographed by Frederick Glasier, circa 1905.
Ringling Museum, Glasier Collection

usual mounting and dismounting in his bareback riding. He finished the act with several somersaults on the moving horse. He was a first rate rider. He occupied the arena with Josie, who as a principal rider did her familiar sort of act. For the 1905 season Robbins had also booked Joe Cousins and his wife, Pearl, as principal riders. The show appeared under a 150 round plus two 50s and a 40 big top. In 1907 Robbins billed his offering as the "world's most wondrous bareback equestrians, saddle sensationalists, manege marvels, delicate riders, handsomest of horses, greatest of artists."

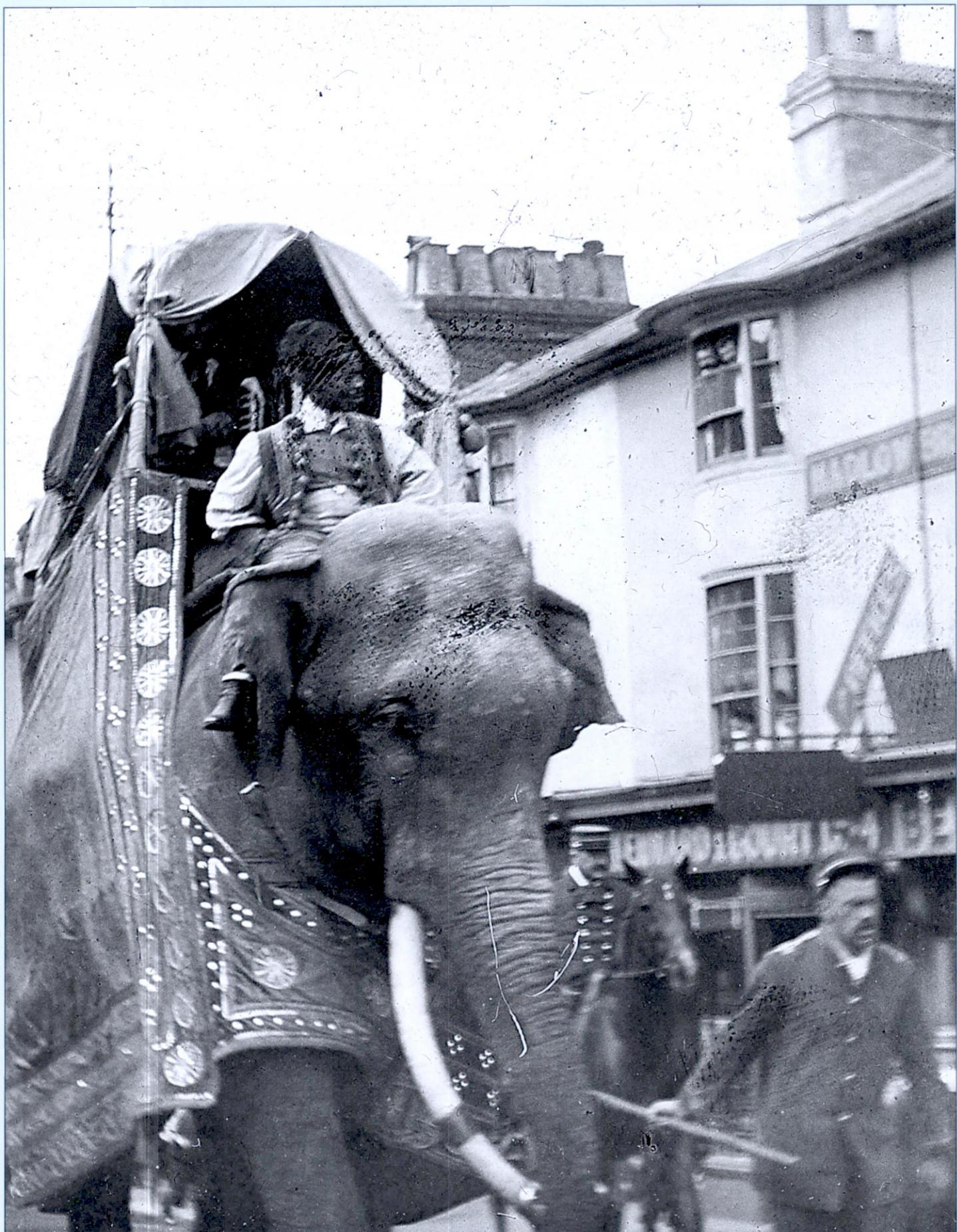
Josie was known privately as Mrs. Josephine Gagnon. She was survived by her husband, Arthur J. Gagnon and also by Frank Ashton, to whom she had previously been married, and by two children. Interment was from the Ashton home in Orange, New Jersey. **Bw**

Note: According to 1900 census data Josie was born in Germany in May of 1868 and immigrated to the United States with her step father and mother, George and Teresa Haeffner, in 1873.

In 1910 Josie Ashton was on Al. F. Wheeler's New Model Shows as a principal rider with a string of blue ribbon horses. In December of that year she appeared at Gould's Society Circus at George J. Gould's estate in Lakewood, New Jersey. "There were special stunts by fake animals and still better stunts by real animals from the Robbins Circus. The riding act by Miss Josie Ashton, the noted rider, was warmly applauded." General Daniel E. Sickles was in the audience that day.

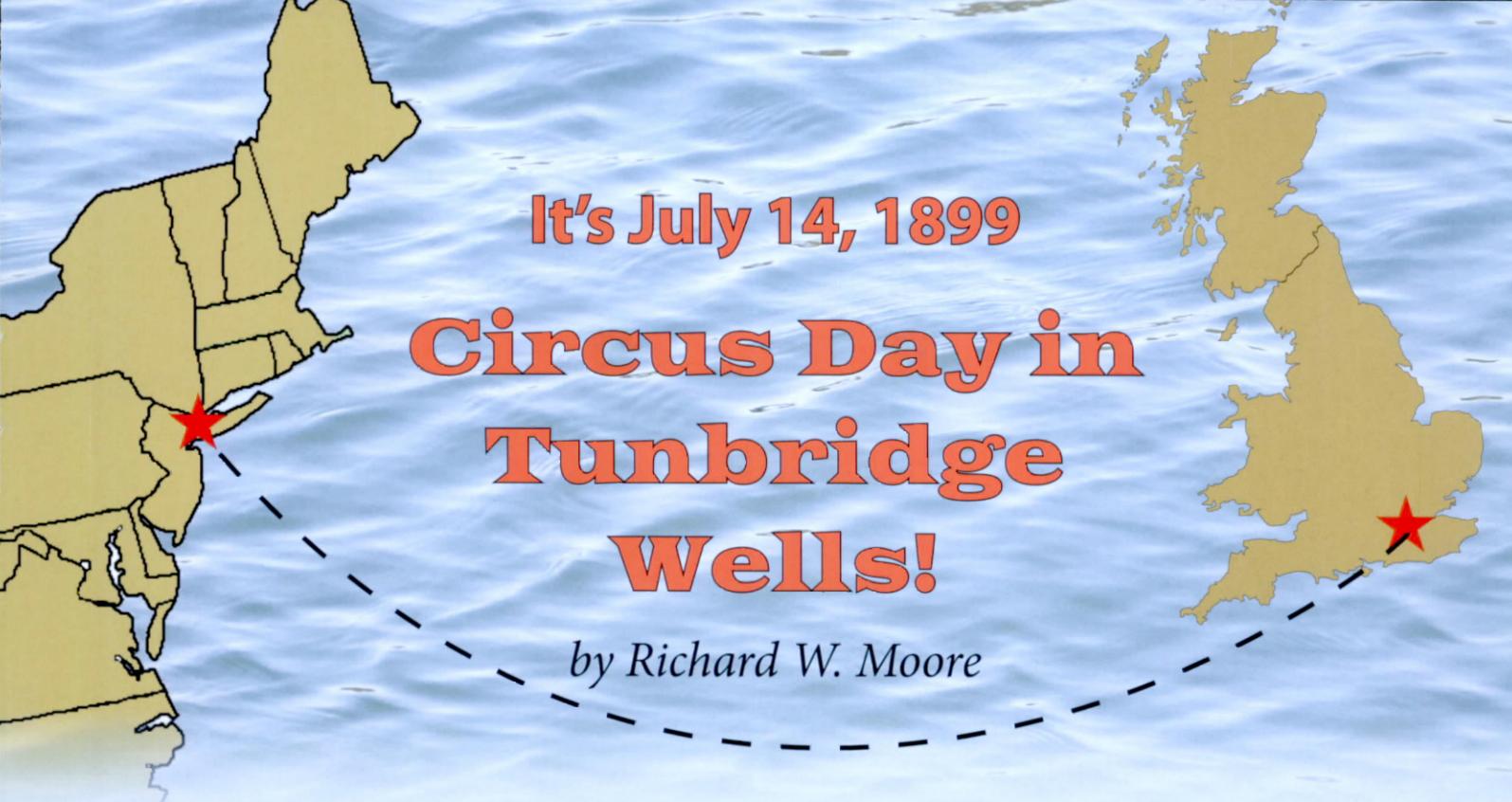
The next year Josie was with the Downie & Wheeler Show. She did principal riding with Walter Jennier. With her high school horse "Don" she always earned plaudits for her clever performances. In August of 1911 she was on the retired list for a few days "suffering from a sprained ankle" but she soon returned to riding again.

On April 28, 1912 Josie Ashton died of cancer at her girlhood home at 141 Lakeside Ave in Orange, New Jersey. She was 42 years of age. She had been with the Barnum Show, also with Ringling Bros., and Forepaugh-Sells Bros. and had toured Europe with the Barnum Show.



One of two elephants with howdahs, possibly Fritz or Mandarin, parading down High Street in Tunbridge Wells on July 14, 1899.

Author's collection



It's July 14, 1899

Circus Day in Tunbridge Wells!

by Richard W. Moore

For the residents of Tunbridge Wells, a town nearly 40 miles southeast of London, the summer of 1899 started no differently from those in the past; school was wrapping up, the Commons and parks were green and the flowers in bloom, the Borough Band performed twice daily, shopkeepers busily displayed and sold their wares, particularly the fine crafted boxes, toys, and fancy articles made of inlaid wood known as "Tunbridge Ware." Tourists arrived to visit and take of the waters at the spa, and to be seen among the society promenading along the Pantiles – a colonnaded walkway leading to the mineral springs.

"By an act passed in 1865, the inhabitants were empowered to hold fairs and markets," in keeping with the decree, July was typically an active month for the Borough.¹ Planning was underway for the month's traditional events of the Agriculture show on Eridge Road and the Horticultural show in the Great Hall grounds. However, in 1899 things were different. When June turned into July there was a new electricity in the air as the anticipation built in ahead of the arrival of "The Greatest Show on Earth."

"This event, the features of which have been placarded on brilliant posters for weeks, has been looked forward to with keen interest."² The circus had finally arrived.

Shortly after the last stroke of midnight, "the first of the trains arrived from Brighton at the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Station at 12:30 in the morning and was followed by others with the last arriving at 2:30."³ In those few hours and for the rest of that day the Borough of Tunbridge Wells and its residents fell under the enchanting spell of Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth.

For one magical Barnum Day, July 14, the town was

transformed. Thousands of people lined the streets for the procession. "...and no sooner was the sound of the drum and trumpet heard than workman threw down their tools, hurried off scaffoldings, ladder, or whatever they were engaged in and hurried to the route selected in time to catch a passing glimpse of the greatest show on earth."⁴ "...School children were crowding about in all directions..."⁵

The "show" was even grander, with breathtaking performance by the all the artists, and astonishing animals acts. The write-up in the *Tunbridge Wells Courier* proclaimed that "the general exhibition defies description."⁶

When the day was over, just as quickly as it arrived, the circus was gone, moving thirty miles southeast to Hastings. However, for Tunbridge Wells and its residents, as the circus has done for countless of numbers over the years, the transformation was not for just a day, but one that left a lifetime of memories filled with the thrills and sights witnessed along the procession route, in the menagerie and "side show" tents, and at the minstrel and vaudeville exhibitions. And memories of the spectacular and death defying performances they saw under the canvas of the big top.

Circus Day Rediscovered

Recently five exceptionally rare magic lantern slides from July 14, 1899 were discovered. While only a few in number, they preserve for circus historians and enthusiasts powerful scenes of the procession in Tunbridge Wells as it passed along High Street on that magical day.

Equally exciting historically is reading the magnificent account of that circus week and day in the articles published in the *Tunbridge Wells Courier*. The first, published July 12,



The newspaper account describes these equestriennes, ten of the sixteen lady riders, as wearing "fawn" costume, alluding to the proper riding outfits.

Author's collection

1899, two days prior to the circus, clearly conveys the excitement and building expectation of the arrival of the circus. The second, published July 19, 1899, provides a fantastic description of that magical Barnum and Bailey Day, the procession and the performance.

Both articles were written in such an extraordinary manner that when reading them it is as if you have stepped back in time and are living that day. The anticipation of the circus' imminent arrival is palpable, and then, when the day comes, it is as if you are standing on High Street hearing the clatter of the horses' hooves, thrilling at the wonder and beauty of the tableaux wagons and the cages as they roll by and then out of sight. You can imagine swaying to the music of the bands and the calliope, cheering and applauding with

the crowds as each group passes, and, finally, sitting mesmerized in the main tent, thrilled by each and every performer and act.

Enjoy your day at the circus – circa July 19, 1899.

Prelude to the 1899 Tour

The European tour was conceived by James A. Bailey, inspired by the Barnum and London show's highly successful short season at the Olympia exhibition hall in London during the winter of 1889-1890. Bailey's plan was to spend the winter months in London, and the summer months touring the provinces. This would be no small task and preparations were started in November 1896. Arrangements included procuring the use of the Olympia for the winter months, de-



The remaining lady riders were costumed in fancy, striped riding attire.

Author's collection

signing and having built special railway cars, laying out and constructing winter quarters at the site selected in Stoke-on-Trent, re-painting and re-gilding the tableaux wagons, reducing the height of cages and wagons to pass under the lower tunnels of the English Railways, contracting the entire company, completing new costume designs, as well as arranging for ocean transport.

With all in place, The Greatest Show on Earth left for the United Kingdom in the fall of 1897. The circus headed across the ocean in multiple stages, just as it did when traveling by train from city to city across the country, but this time sailing in six ships, starting in September, with the final ship arriving in London November 25.

"The first of the company to depart was that prince of contracting agents R. G. Ball, who left on September 11th. Messrs. C. L. Dean, Al Riel, H. H. Gunning and some artists sailed from New York on the S.S. *Manitoba* October 16th. The bill-posters with the advertising material departed on the S.S. *Mississippi* October 16th, General Agent W. H. Gardner leaving the following day on the ocean grey-hound *Kaiser William der Grosse*. October 30th saw the departure of the S.S. *Mohawk* which carried another batch of the performers and curiosities, while the balance of the artists, musicians and 'freaks' left on the S.S. *Mobile* November 6th in charge of P. S. Mattox.



Twelve camels with riders costumed in exotic wardrobe reminiscent of Middle Eastern cultures followed the herd of elephants in the procession.

Author's collection

"The S.S. *Massachusetts* carried the show proper and left New York on November 12th. On February 20th, 1898, the second voyage of S.S. *Massachusetts* departed New York bringing over the balance of the show (for the tour itself)..."⁷

The show opened in London at the Olympia on December 27, 1897 and ran until April 2, 1898. The following day the day the circus was off on the first tour in England and

Scotland, covering 71 cities with 362 performances from April 4th to November 12.⁸

Barnum and Bailey Tour 1899

In 1899 the United Kingdom was again the scene of the second of four spectacular seasons that The Greatest Show on Earth toured overseas. After spending December 26, 1898 through April 8, 1899 performing at the Olympia, the Barnum & Bailey Grand Tour officially began in the city of



Near the end of the parade, units representing various scenes of The Return of Columbus to Barcelona, echoed the triumphant arrival of the circus itself.

Author's collection

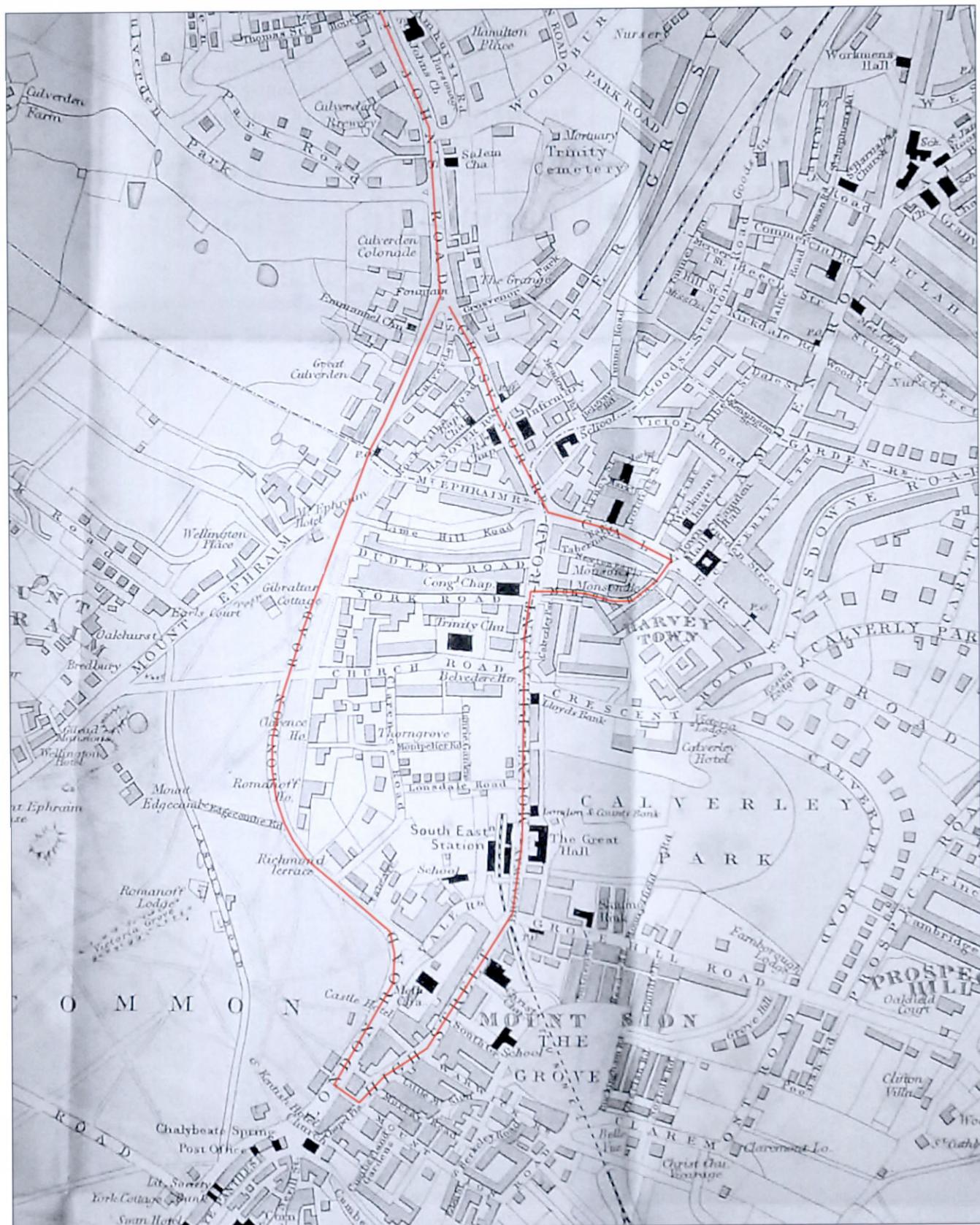
Birmingham on April 10. Over the next 216 days the show traveled to 112 cities, towns and boroughs throughout England and Scotland. Amazingly, but as only James A. Bailey and the showmen of his era could manage, 93 of the locations were one day stands. Since no shows were held on Sundays, the circus actually performed a total of 319 shows in 112 different locations on 186 show days, covering 4,073 miles.⁹

In July of that year alone, the Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth, performed in 24 different towns over the 26 show days in the month. This schedule is all the more phenomenal when one considers the size of the entire entourage, as well as the pre-planning and logistics that had to be carried out with extreme precision and timing day after day.

Tunbridge Wells, England

Tunbridge Wells, sometimes referred to as Royal Tunbridge Wells, was one of those July one day stops of the tour. In the 1899 Kelly Directory, Tunbridge Wells is described as "...a fashionable watering place, municipal borough and market town...."¹⁰ Located in West Kent, about 64 km South-East of London, close to the border of the County of Essex, the town's 400 hundred year history goes back to Georgian times.

The Kelly Directory elaborates on the town's beginnings, explaining that "the district possesses beds of secondary iron ore, which gives rise to the chalybeate springs here, accidentally discovered during the reign of James I by Dudley Lord North when on a visit to Edridge Castle, the seat of the



Starting at the top of the map, the parade traveled south on St John's Road to London Road which was followed further south to High Street. The parade then turned north onto Mount Pleasant Street and proceeded to Monson Road. The procession moved northeast until turning back to the west on Calverley Road. The loop of Tunbridge Wells was completed when the parade traveled north on Grosvenor Road and then up St John's Road to the show grounds at Whites Field.

Tunbridge Wells Museum

Marquess of Abergavenny, his attention being excited by the ochreous aspect of the water in the neighbourhood; having himself experimented with the water in hope that it might prove medicinal, and deriving great benefit from its use, it gradually began to attract notice and the Marquess of Abergavenny enclosed two springs and made various improvements with a view of popularizing the new remedy: ..."¹¹

Over the centuries Tunbridge Wells prospered as a spa and resort town, with continued visits from royalty, prominent leaders, and members of society. While the town's popularity waned in the 1750s with the advent of "sea bathing" as a treatment for diseases, it experienced new growth in the early 19th Century, again viewed as an elegant resort town for notables of high society, including the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

The Barnum and Bailey route book's description of the town: "Tunbridge Wells, a popular inland watering place, where some splendid souvenirs in wood-mosaic were obtained, exceeded our expectations in the way of business July 14th..."¹² Today Tunbridge Wells is the only spa in the South East of England, with 30% of its income still from tourism.

Postscript

The Third Tour (1900) took the Greatest Show on Earth to Germany, covering 55 cities, with 380 performances.¹³

The Fourth Tour (1901) included a winter season in Vienna, and then traveled across five empires with 449 performances in 125 cities.¹⁴

In addition to the two winters' performances in London and the one in Vienna, the entire four year tour performed in 363 cities, gave 1,540 performances and traveled 17,044 miles across 7 empires. This remarkable achievement can be best summed as the London papers called it the "Out Barnum of Barnum by his clever successor Bailey." For the thousands of people it touched it was and always will be:

The Greatest Show on Earth.

Special thanks for identifying the street location of the slides and for obtaining the two articles go to:

Ian Beavis, Collections Management Officer and members of his staff, Belinda Johnson and Susan Rogers, at the Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery, Kent.

David Todd, Customer Support Assistant, Libraries Registration & Archives, Kent County Council.

Margaret Querstret, Customer Support Assistant, Tunbridge Wells District Libraries, Registration and Archives, Kent County Council.



High Street - This is the street where the slides were taken. In the slides you can see the buildings on the right, about half way down the street with the tall chimneys and chimney pots.

Tunbridge Wells Museum

Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth

from Tunbridge Wells Courier, July 12, 1899

We look upon it as a distinct honour to Tunbridge Wells that the town should have been selected for a visit from Messrs. Barnum and Bailey with undoubtedly the greatest show on earth. There are, we understand, many false rumours current concerning the single price of admittance, and Messrs. Barnum and Bailey have asked us to assist them in correcting them by assuring the public that one ticket commands a view of all the advertised attractions and a seat, whether the ticket is a shilling or seven and sixpence. There is nothing more to pay. The difference in the various prices only means a better seat in a better lo-

cation, according to the price paid. The one price, whatever is paid, entitles the holder of a ticket to see everything that is advertised in connection with the exhibition. There is a side show and a minstrel and vaudeville exhibition, to which sixpence is charged, but these form no part of the big show. Every seat, including the cheapest, is guaranteed to give a good view of the entire performance.

The Procession

All showmen of any pretensions look to the glitter of gilt and tinsel and the brave spectacle of cavalcades to help their receipts, but Messrs. Barnum and

Bailey have reduced this to a fine art, and it has been left to them to show the public what is possible in the way of big street pageants. The "greatest show on earth" seemingly throws out its greatest energies for this free display of its magnificent resources. This event, the features of which have been placarded on brilliant posters for weeks, has been looked forward to with keen interest, and on Friday morning we anticipate our main thoroughfares will be lined with crowds of sightseers. It is said the procession which will start from the showground, will be at least a mile in length, and will consist, amongst other things, of a platoon of police, mounted officers, a military band, a forty-horse team, seven open dens of wild beasts, a novel male choir, chimes drawn by six horses, lady performers, and side saddle experts, mounted ladies of the hippodrome, gentlemen hippodrome riders, two 2 horse Roman chariots with



The units of the Barnum & Bailey parade as depicted in this 1898 poster are a remarkably true representation of what the Tunbridge Wells Courier article described.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection

lady drivers, two 4-horse Roman chariots, band chariot drawn by ten horses, eight golden chariots containing wild beasts, triumphal chariots, caravan of camels with Asiatic riders, twenty performing elephants, two elephants with howdahs and Oriental beauties, band chariot drawn by six zebras, Japanese dragon chariot with performers, nursery characters in coaches, Blue Band chariot drawn by ten horses, seven

golden cages containing rare animals, an organ chariot, a triumphal float, followed by the Columbus sections, Royal mace bearers and squad of eight Royal trumpeters, triumphal throne chariot of Ferdinand and Isabella, mounted grandes, nobles, cavaliers, knights and ambassadors, the Great Discoverer Christopher Columbus, an emblematic float, and a Calliope. It is arranged that the procession shall

take place between 9 and 10 o'clock, and the order of the route will be St. John's road, London road, High Street, Mount Pleasant, Monson-road, Calverley road, Grosvenor road, back through St. John's road to the Show Field. Spectators will be able to see a triumph in the art of coaching. On Friday morning 7s 6d and 4s seats can be booked at Mr. H. G. Groves, Pantiles Post Office.



Features of the 1898 Barnum & Bailey show.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection

"The Greatest Show on Earth" at Tunbridge Wells

The Grand Procession

A Colossal Affair

from Tunbridge Wells Courier, July 19, 1899

On Friday morning last Messrs. Barnum and Bailey's show arrived at Tunbridge Wells, and the anticipation of the last few weeks reached a climax when the much talked of visit became an accomplished fact. We are near enough to London to be familiar with the displays at Olympia, but, nevertheless, the interest excited locally is as keen as in any of the more remote districts which this great show visited, and judging from the crowds which lined the streets this morning, the visit of the premier showmen has created more interest than any recent event in the town. But it is our first duty to deal

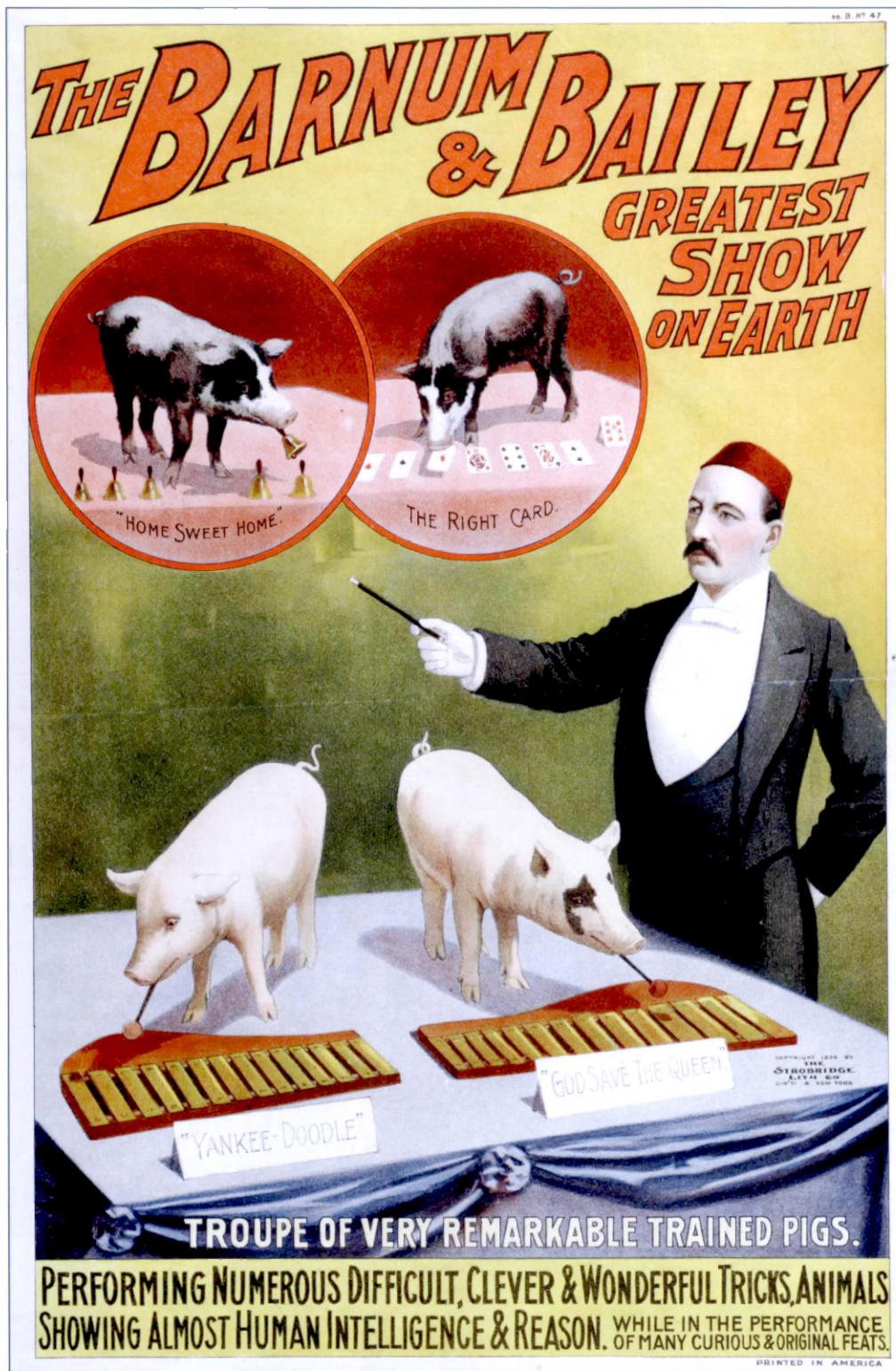
with the arrival, which took place in the small hours of the morning. White's Fields, St John's, was the locale of this mammoth exhibition, which the complete organization of Messrs. Barnum and Bailey enables them to rear as if by magic. The Show with 840 persons engaged in it arrived in four trains, to which were attached 67 railroad cars, each of which is 54 feet long and built on the American plan. Automatic couplers, now the subject of much discussion, are used, with all the latest devices of the railway world. There are sleeping cars on the well-known Pullman model, in which the show people

rest as they move from place to place. The first of the trains arrived at the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway from Brighton at 12:30 in the morning, and was followed by the others, the last reaching Tunbridge Wells about 2:30. Reference has been made to the magic-like celerity with which the fields were transformed into a show field with huge tents, which all told number 17. One instance of the perfect system which prevails may be quoted as indicative of the whole. Messrs. Barnum and Bailey have with them their own caterers, with a staff of 12 cooks and 60 waiters, and, incred-



American style lithographs sold the wonders of the show to audiences long before its arrival.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection



The performing pigs are among the acts singled out in the newspaper's account.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection

ible, though it may seem, within 60 minutes of the arrival of the "range" van at the field, breakfast was ready for everyone, with the tables all laid in one of the large tents. Turning to the show, never has a meadow raised a so stupendous a crop in one night as was to be found here. Next to the size of the

Show, probably the most striking feature of it is the extraordinary celerity and ease with which it is transported from town to town. The fabled palace of Aladdin was scarce moved with more dispatch. The secret, of course, is in the perfection and almost mechanical precision which characterizes the whole

organization - animals as well as the men. Those whose duty or curiosity called them to the scene at that untimely hour declared that the process of unloading the hundreds of horse, wild animals, wagons, and accessories of the show was a really amazing spectacle. Each wagon was drawn by teams of six and eight horses, and from all accounts the constant tramp of hoofs and the clatter of the hundred and odd heavily-laden vehicles, would make sleep well-neigh impossible for the residents in this particular neighborhood. When the miscellaneous freight was disgorged on the show area,

The Scene on the Ground

was one of remarkable activity. The menagerie tent, owing to its dimensions, stood out conspicuously from the rest, but when the pavilion which is devoted to the performance, and is 600 feet long, was reared, it was dwarfed into comparative insignificance. A survey of the show in what may be termed its dishabille state formed a rather interesting study. In the southernmost tent were the blacksmiths and mechanics, of whom there are stated to be 75 engaged all year around. A short distance from this was the establishment of a coiffeur, who was counterfitting nature by dressing a wig of golden hair with all the necessities of his art around him. The next tent was a gigantic structure, as it might well be, seeing that its contents consisted of 250 heavy horses, including a magnificent stud of greys, which a contingent of oatlers were grooming with practiced hands, whilst others were brushing up apparently endless lines of harness. Still nearer to the centre of the ground was the ring stud department, which contained 115 circus horses, representing a small fortune of value. The neighbor to this was the menagerie, a veritable Noah's Ark, which betrayed its character by a babel of noises, chief among which was the trumpeting of a score of elephants; elsewhere on the grounds were dressing tents, side shows, and last but not least the cooking and dining tents. These are on a gigantic scale, which is readily understood when it is remembered that about 800 persons have to be provided for thrice a day. There are twelve cooks and 60 waiters, and it is stated to be the rule of the establishment that all get the same food

— the stable boy has as good a meal as the proprietor. Here is a sample lunch menu: Soup, roast beef, Irish stew, turkey, potatoes, bread, coffee, and that indispensable item for an American, iced water. A day's consumption of provisions includes 2,100 lbs. of meat, 700 lbs. of bread, 16 bushels of potatoes, 120 lbs. of coffee, and 5 lbs. of tea. Coffee is served at every meal. Before leaving the commissariat department, it may be added that the quantity of feeding stuff the horses and exhibition animals require daily includes 10 tons of hay and 156 bushels of oats, whilst for litter 10 tons of wheat straw is used per diem. The value of the 400 horses connected with the establishment is set down at £30,000. The necessary sleeping accommodations for the army of artistes and workmen connected with the show is met by the hiring of rooms in the towns visited, and the utilization of a dozen sleeping cars, including Mr. Bailey's private car. In

strolling through the show ground the visitor was confronted with so many unaccustomed sights that he might have doubted whether he had not been suddenly transported across the main to the New World. Almost everyone connected with the working staff of the show is either a native or a naturalized American. Everywhere the American accent fell upon one's ears, and the tall, sturdy, big muscled fellows hard at work or at rest reminded one vividly of the Western types whom Mr. Frederic Remington portrays with such fidelity in the pages of Harper's. Still further variety was added to the scene by the presence of Orientals in fez and flowing robes, and the members of the freak genus, who were indulging in a constitutional.

When the procession, which was a mile in length, emerged from the show-ground, where a large concourse of spectators had assembled, the mounted police assumed the lead, and

from thence piloted it thorough the thoroughfares of the town. After the police, the band carriage led the way, the music from which told the throngs of spectators ahead of the approach of the cortege. There was nothing finer in the display than this first contingent. The chief achievement naturally was the harnessing of forty bays to the leading carriage. In this case the fittings are all the best-made harness, and the amount of leather, buckles, and adjustment involved may perhaps be imagined. It would not do for a single strap to be a single hole out, for the animals are entirely placed under the control of one man, and he literally and actual has his hands full. Jake Posey, the hero in question, is a driver with a record to boast of. In his hands he holds the ribbons which guide the forty horses, and these alone mean dead weight to him of ninety pounds without allowance for a pull of an ounce. The horses are harnessed four abreast, and there



The scale of the great traveling American circus was mesmerizing to many of its European audiences.

Ringling Museum, Tibbals Collection

are ten relays of them; driving around a corner in Sheffield recently Jake lost sight of practically all his team, yet he had them still under control! The horses are beautifully matched, of very even build as well as colour; nearly forty minutes were occupied in hitching them all in. Mr. Frank Hyatt, who had the general supervision of the out-o'-doors show for something like thirty years, was able to lead off the pageant as nine o'clock struck. Carl Clair's military band was accommodated in the gilded car which "the forty" drew, and these led the procession, the musicians played. Immediately behind came seven open cages containing the handsome Bengal tigers, lions, leopards (one of which was quite black - a curiosity), pumas, hyenas, Siberian wolves, and bears; each cage was also tenanted by an unconcerned keeper, who as far as appearance went, might have been in a cage with dummies. Following these was a "chimes van," a pretty fancy, in which a performer at a key-board controlled a number of silver tubes, on which church bells were imitated. Sixteen lady riders in neat fawn or fancy costumes, and five gentlemen jockeys rode in front of a couple two-horse and a couple four-horse Roman chariots, and a handsome bandwagon with performers, which was drawn by a lovely team of blacks. Ten closed vans containing animals, but whose gilded exteriors were very picturesque, came next, being in advance of twelve camels, whose riders wore Egyptian or Arab costumes. Sixteen elephants were headed by the huge beasts Mandarin and Fritz. The last named was four inches less in height than was the historic Jumbo, but he weighs 1,200 lb more. Teams of six ponies trotted along behind the elephants, affording a striking contrast in the poetry of motion; these drew cars on which were representations in tremendous carved figures of "Mother Goose," "Cinderella," and "Bluebeard." The Japanese troupe in a most appropriately coloured and shaped car, were body-guarded by a whimsical clown in a pony turn out, and after a band van and eight more closed animal wagons, the concluding section was reached. This was an endeavor to portray the return of Columbus after his important voyage. Proceeded by two heralds and the Royal trumpeters, the King and Queen of Spain, enthroned in elegance, were drawn, surrounded and escorted by Maids of Honour, and followed by quite a host of cavaliers, nobles, officers, Moors, and a detachment of golden-armoured knights, Columbus himself bringing up the rear with a trophy car, on which were an Indian wigwam, Indians, war materials, jewels, &c. The whole of these costumes were techni-

cally correct, according to history; they made an imposing sight. The very last item in the cavalcade was a steam caliope, an invention much favored by Mississippi steamboats, and by which a whistle is worked with steam and so controlled that it can play various well-known airs. At the corners of each car were flown flags of all nations, the effect being decidedly good. The procession which took twenty minutes to pass any given point, and which was more than a mile in length, followed the advertised route. After surveying the whole procession, and reflecting thereon, probably the general conclusion will be that its greatest feature is the splendid display of horseflesh. The equine stud was the best of its kind, and every animal seemed in perfect condition so far as the momentary glances of each team could indicate. Probably no finer or more unique display of horses - not to speak of elephants and wild beasts - was ever presented before the public; and a word of praise must be added for the admirable way in which Chief Constable Prior regulated street traffic. The whole arrangements for the procession were, in fact, previously submitted for his approval. The fine weather, of course, added to the success of the spectacle.

To view this wonderful cavalcade the streets and the Common were utilized by the thousands of people, notwithstanding the unusually early hour of nine o'clock being the appointed time. In fact, long before the clocks of the town proclaimed that that hour the coigns of vantage were occupied, and no sooner was the sound of the drum and trumpet heard than workmen threw down their tools, hurried off their scaffolding, ladders, or whatever they were engaged upon and hurried to the route selected in time to catch a passing glimpse of the greatest show on earth. Perambulators were much in evidence and from the number of school-children who were crowding about in all directions the early attendance rolls at the several schools of the town must have presented a somewhat singular appearance. The order of the procession, and the route selected was as notified on our sixth page. It was indeed a monster cavalcade for apparently "the greatest show on earth" throws out its greatest energies for this free display of its magnificent resources. The horses were all of them splendid animals, and all looked well groomed and cared for, a grand contrast to the sorry spectacle one sometimes sees in our streets on such occasions. They were richly caparisoned and fortunately the weather was all that could be desired so that they were able to be seen at their best.

The Performance

Turning to the performance, no time was wasted, the opening parade, which was in part a repetition of the Columbus section of the street pageant, being immediately followed by three different batches of trained elephants, who occupied the rings and went through with their singular performances. It was impossible to see anything like all that was done, and later in the programme, when five different shows were going on at once, the bewilderment was greater than ever. By the exercise of wondrous agility it was possible to get a glimpse of everything, but the experiment is scarcely to be recommended; seemingly it would be better to go again, this evening, and by varying the seat watch what proceeds immediately in front of one, and be content with that.

The general exhibition defies description; to attempt anything like an adequate catalogue of what is to be seen would be to write a volume. Nearly two hours seemed all too short a time in which to "see" the animals in the menagerie properly, to say nothing of the human prodigies who are on view in the same tent. The monkey cages were naturally unending sources of amusement, hippopotamus, who obligingly opens his capacious and curious maw, the polar bears, who seem to have found an answer to the perpetual motion problem, the intelligent elephants, and the numerous odd creatures of Nature, were each and all worthy of a far more minute inspection than was possible. The prodigies had to be seen to be believed. Among them may be mentioned the wild men of Borneo, two curious little men who cannot speak, but who possess much intelligence; Hassen Ali, a gigantic young Egyptian, whose hand is a foot, and whose foot is nearly a yard; Khusani, a Hindu venerable, whose 22 inches of stature allow him to tip the beam at 24 lb.; Lalloo, another wonderful Hindu who has a second body attached to his own; Chas. Tripp, a handless man; Delphi, an indescribable; A Yankee boy of seven who talks like a lawyer, and remembers figures phenomenally; Jo-Jo "the human skycranner," who has the face of a dog covered with long hair; Miss Annie Jones, who boasts a luxuriant beard; Miss Ivy, the monster headed girl; Billy Wells, whose head seems intended for an anvil; Frank and Annie Howard, who are tattooed marvelously; James Morris, whose skin seems to be well-mixed with gutta-percha; Tomasso, a young man who thrusts pins into himself in a most amazing manner; Alfonso, a negro who has a terrific appetite for tinctacks, wadding, paraffin oil, and other

like delicacies; Delin Fritz, who swallows swords and bayonets and many other things. There are trained pigs too. Artistic performances by a clever Japanese couple, and lightning calculations by a gentleman who had "a system," which he will communicate for a small consideration, are other noteworthy features.

In the side show tent, for which a small extra charge is made, very full value for the money is given. Just inside the door may be found "Zip." P. T. Barnum's famous "What is it?" by whose means he amassed a fortune in 1864 in the old American Museum. Zip has a very small head of phenomenal shape; he was picked up at Singapore, by a sailor, and his value as an exhibit was at once seen by the late Show King. He cannot speak, but hears and understands tolerably; he is a "ward of the show," and enjoys perfect health and, to him, an ideal existence. A snake charmer is next, a ventriloquist, and Eli Bowan, a legless man of great ability. At the far end a cat orchestra, in which real cats play real instruments, finds rooms, and on the other side are ranged

Gamia, a strong man who lifts a 250 lb. dumb-bell with ease; Prince Zamuda, a conjuror who does the Maskelynea box trick very smartly; and a needle swallower, whose appetite is as enormous as it is singular.

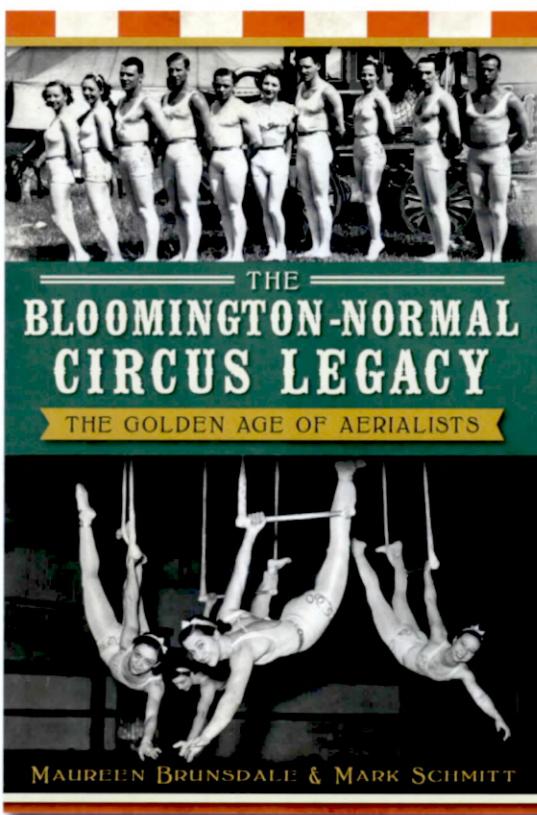
Large crowds gathered in the vicinity of the show and watched with interest every phase of the work of the erection as it was expeditiously carried on. Especially interested were they in the novel spectacle of witnessing a score of elephants being watered. The raising of the principle tent was a operation calling for great skill, patience, and no small amount of strength, but it was accomplished in a wonderfully short space of time, as also was the fitting of that mass of seats, which is built to accommodate 15,000 human beings. **Bw**

These Magic Lantern Slides are from the private collection of Dick Moore. Dick is an avid collector of magic lanterns and slides, and as part of his extensive collection, has amassed a significant and noteworthy collection of rare historical circus lantern slides from the U.S., the U.K.,

and France, dating from the 1860s into the late 1920s. In addition to his membership in the Circus Historical Society, he is a member and past president of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada and member of the Magic Lantern Society in the U.K.

Endnotes

1. *Kelly's Tunbridge Wells Directory, 1898-1899*
2. *Tunbridge Wells Courier, July 12th*
3. *Tunbridge Wells Courier, July 19th*
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. *Harvey Watkins. Four Years in Europe - The Barnum and Bailey Greatest Show on Earth in the Old World, 1901.* p.3
8. *ibid.* p.3
9. *ibid.* p.39
10. *Kelly's Tunbridge Wells Directory, 1898-1899*
11. *ibid.*
12. *Watkins p.29*
13. *ibid.* p.59
14. *ibid.* p.99



The Bloomington-Normal Circus Legacy THE GOLDEN AGE OF AERIALISTS

MAUREEN BRUNSDALE & MARK SCHMITT

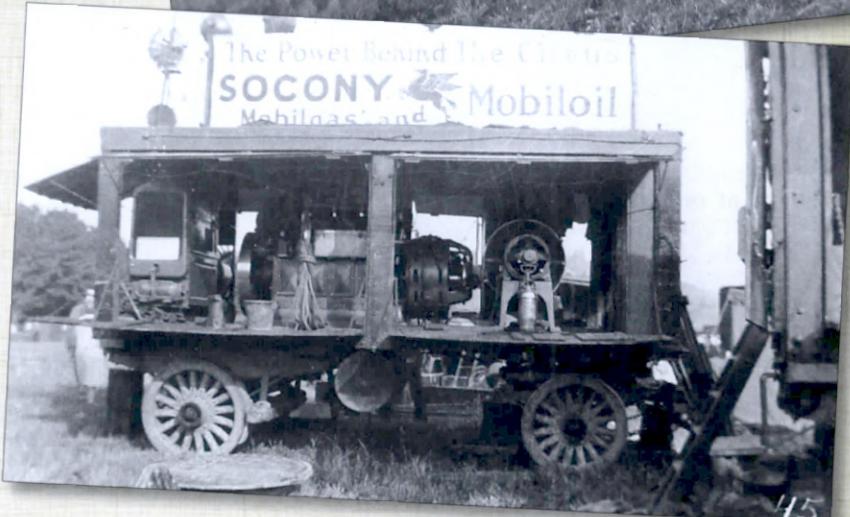
Starting in the 1870s, the barns, icehouses, gymnasiums and empty theaters of central Illinois provided the practice sites for aerial performers whose names still command reverence in the annals of American circus history. Meet Fred Miltimore and the Green Brothers, runaways from the Fourth Ward School who became the first Bloomington-born flyers. Watch Art Concello, a ten-year-old truant, become first a world class flyer, then a famous trapeze impresario and finally Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus's most successful general manager. The entire art of the trapeze—instruction, training, performance and management—became a Bloomington-Normal industry during the tented shows' golden age, when finding a circus flying act in America without a connection to this area would have been virtually impossible.

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Stuart Thayer, Fred Pfening, Jr., Orin King, William Slout, Fred Dahlinger, Bob MacDougall, Fred Pfening III, and Richard Reynolds were among the authors.

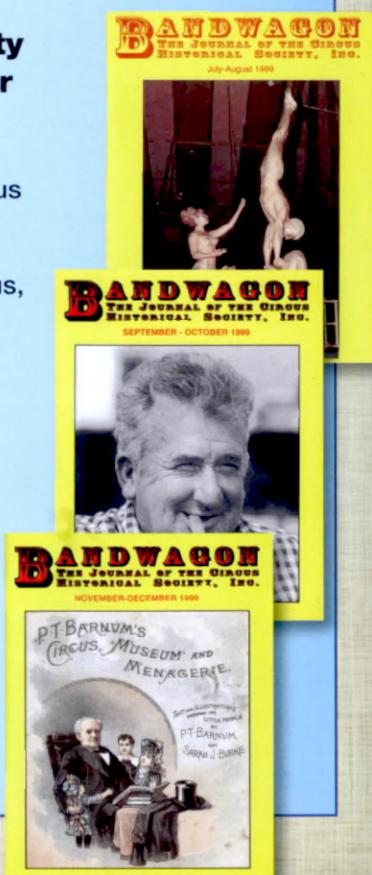
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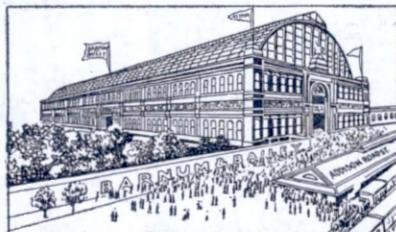


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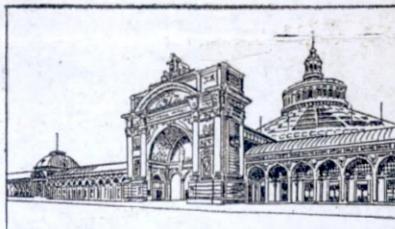
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